

Georgi Plekhanov

Selected Philosophical Works

Volume 2

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**INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY
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OF THE USSR**

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Г.В.Плеханов

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Т о м I I

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ
МОСКВА

Georgi Plekhanov

Selected Philosophical Works

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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G. V. PLEKHANOV'S DEFENCE AND SUBSTANTIATION OF DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov, outstanding Marxist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a fighter for the scientific materialist world-outlook, and against reactionary idealist philosophy and philosophical revisionism. In his defence of dialectical and historical materialism against the overt and covert enemies of Marxism, Plekhanov did much valuable work, during the first two decades of his Marxist activities (1883-1903), in analysing and developing a number of questions of Marxist philosophy.

His understanding of the theory of historical materialism was far deeper and more correct than that of the leading theorists of West-European Social-Democracy of the time. He laid stress on the inner links between the materialist explanation of history and dialectical materialism, and came out against attempts to impose on Marxism idealist views that were alien to it. "...All the aspects of Marx's world-outlook," Plekhanov wrote, "are intimately bound up with one another ... in consequence of which one cannot arbitrarily eliminate anyone of them and replace it with a sum of views no less arbitrarily clutched out of a quite different world-outlook."

In his defence of the philosophy of Marxism, Plekhanov paid attention, first and foremost, to the study and popularisation of such important questions of historical materialism as the relation between social being and social consciousness, the patterns of social development, the role of the masses and of the individual in history, the essence of, and interaction between, various forms of social consciousness, such as art, religion, the relative independence of the development of ideologies, and the like.

Plekhanov waged a struggle for the triumph of the scientific materialist world-outlook in the Russian and world labour movement at the turn of the century, in the conditions of an aggravated political and ideological conflict in society.

The end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth were marked by a mounting struggle waged by the

bourgeoisie and their ideologists against Marxism and its philosophy. The ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the revisionists—its abettors in the working-class movement—launched a wide-scale offensive against Marxist philosophy.

"The dialectics of history," Lenin wrote, "were such that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists."* Marxism had become the vogue in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois circles. It was disputed and criticised; "concessions" were demanded of it; there were attempts to blend it with liberalism and with various trends in bourgeois ideology. It was against this background that such bourgeois liberals as Wolf, Brentano and Sombart acted. In their struggle against Marxism, the latter's overt and covert enemies made use of neo-Kantianism, and the eclectic so-called "theory of factors", thereby trying to convert Marxism into vulgar "economic materialism", replace it by "*Kathedersocialism*", and so on.

The attempts made by the bourgeois enemies of the Marxist theory, as well as by its false friends in the Social-Democratic camp, to turn Marxism into a dogma, to distort it were firmly countered by Engels, who stressed the need for a struggle against the smuggling of bourgeois ideology into the working-class movement. In his correspondence, he unmasked the bourgeoisie's attempts to revise Marxism, and especially the materialist understanding of history. In a letter to Paul Ernst (June 5, 1890) Engels wrote the following: "...As far as your attempt to treat the matter materialistically is concerned I must say in the first place that the materialist method turns into its opposite if it is not taken as one's guiding principle in historical investigation but as a ready-made pattern according to which one shapes the facts of history to suit oneself."** Engels subjected to a thorough critical analysis the theoretical writings of the German Social-Democrats of the time, including Karl Kautsky, who had already revealed deviations from revolutionary Marxism. At the same time, Engels was pleased by the appearance of such genuinely Marxist works as Franz Mehring's *Legend of Lessing*, and Plekhanov's *The Development of the Monist View of History*. In a letter to August Bebel dated March 16, 1892, he expressed high appreciation of Mehring's book, while noting its shortcomings. He also approved of Plekhanov's works, showed an interest in them, and welcomed their translations into foreign languages.

After Engels's death, such bourgeois ideologists as Barth, Lacombe, Schultze-Gävernitz, and Kareyev came out against the materialist understanding of history. The overt enemies of

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 584.—Ed.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 390-91.—Ed.

Marxism were supported by the revisionists in the Second International, who adopted their idealist world-outlook, vulgar evolutionism, and mode of "criticising" historical materialism. There was hardly a single idealist doctrine the revisionists did not try to "reconcile" Marxism with. Bernstein called for a return to Kant; C. Schmidt demanded that Marxism be blended with neo-Kantianism; Woltmann declared that Marxism should be reconciled with Kantianism and "social Darwinism", while Staudinger attempted to link up Marxism with neo-Kantianism and Machism. "In the sphere of philosophy", Lenin wrote, "revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial 'science'."*

The revisionists tried to divorce Marx's economic theory and the theory of scientific communism from philosophical materialism, and to distort them in the spirit of vulgar materialism, "complementing" Marxism with neo-Kantianism and Machism.

Slovenly reasoned articles by eclectics and idealists were published in *Neue Zeit*, theoretical journal of the German Social-Democrats, and especially in the newspaper *Vorwärts!*, both of which were staunch supporters of neo-Kantianism, and were hostile to materialism.

Very often the Social-Democratic press did not find space for writings in defence of Marxist philosophy against idealist and vulgarising distortions. Thus, *Vorwärts!* did not publish an article contributed by G. V. Plekhanov, under the title of "Comrade Paul Ernst and the Materialist Understanding of History", which criticised idealist distortions of historical materialism.

In the mid-nineties, the Russian bourgeoisie also attempted to subordinate and adapt the working-class movement to the interests of bourgeois society. Such "legal Marxists" as Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky and Bulgakov attempted to revise Marxism and its philosophy. "Legal Marxism" was a variety of international revisionism.

In the field of philosophy, the "legal Marxists" came out in opposition to Marxist philosophical materialism and materialist dialectics, to which they contraposed neo-Kantian idealism and the vulgar theory of evolution. Calling the "legal Marxists'" philosophical views eclectic, Lenin considered them a direct reflection of the bourgeois philosophy of the times.

In considerable measure, Struve, Bernstein and other revisionists followed in the footsteps of such neo-Kantian philosophers as Riel, Simmel, and Stammler, and repeated their slander of Marxism. As Naumann, a bitter enemy of Marxism, wrote in the journal *Die Hilfe*, "In his criticism of Marxism, Bernstein says nothing except what has often been said in national-social

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 33.—Ed.

circles; he says all this very well and skilfully, but what is important, in the first place, is that it is he who says it. If we say that, then it is an 'enemy' speaking; if he says the same thing, it comes from a 'comrade'."

The revisionists' attacks against the theory of Marxism often met with no serious resistance within the Second International. Revolutionary Marxists such as Paul Lafargue, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Franz Mehring underestimated the danger from the revisionist trend, and especially Bernstein's struggle against Marxist materialism. Paul Lafargue was inclined to regard Bernstein's "criticism" of Marxism as a result of his "intellectual overstrain". Wilhelm Liebknecht spoke of Bernsteinianism as an intellectual trend, which should not be taken into account. In Franz Mehring's opinion, revisionism was not engendered by the social and historical conditions of the development of the working-class movement. "Revisionism has never been more than a mood in Germany," he wrote.

The official "orthodoxy" in German Social-Democratic Party was to end with "dissensions" within the Party as soon as possible. Kautsky's attack against Bernstein was not a voluntary act but a consequence of pressure from the rank-and-file Social-Democrats. Besides, a considerable influence in this respect was exerted by Plekhanov's polemical articles in *Neue Zeit*, directed against C. Schmidt and Bernstein, as well as the criticism of revisionism coming from members of German Social-Democratic Left wing.

In these conditions, Plekhanov's firm defence of the scientific foundations of the Marxist world-outlook and the dialectical method was of great significance, in principle, to the international working-class movement. His writings became well known in Western Europe and played an important part in exposing revisionism as bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the working-class movement. Plekhanov came out against these new enemies of Marxism in the working-class movement, not only in the press but also at invariably well-attended lectures in France, Switzerland, and elsewhere. His writings were intended to preclude the bourgeois world-outlook penetrating into the working-class movement. Attaching great importance to the theoretical education of the working class and of its Social-Democratic vanguard, Plekhanov said: "...Without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement in the true sense of the word."* He realised the tremendous importance of Marxist materialism in spreading the ideas of scientific socialism in Russia and in refuting its opponents' views. As far

* G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 90.—Ed.

back as 1892 he wrote that "triumphant reaction attires itself in our country, among other things, in a philosophical raiment.... The Russian socialists will be obliged to take this philosophical reaction into account and consequently study philosophy."*

Of particular importance for the struggle against philosophical reaction and philosophical revisionism were Plekhanov's writings of the second half of the nineties and the early years of the present century (up to 1903), which are included in this volume. These works contain a critique of neo-Kantian philosophy, the idealist understanding of history, the eclectic theory of factors, "economic materialism", the vulgar evolutionism of the reactionary bourgeois philosophers and sociologists, as well as various forms of revision of dialectical and historical materialism by the "legal Marxists", the Bernsteinians and the like. These works are a valuable contribution to the history of Marxist philosophy.

In their content, the articles included in this volume of Plekhanov's *Selected Philosophical Works* fall into three groups: the first contains writings revealing the inner link between present-day Marxist materialism and the preceding materialism, and providing an analysis of the ideas of the French materialists, with special emphasis on the revolution brought about by Marxism in the sphere of philosophy. The second group is made up of articles substantiating the materialist understanding of history, in a struggle against bourgeois ideologists. The third group contains articles criticising the "critics" of Marxism, such as Eduard Bernstein, C. Schmidt, Pyotr Struve, and other revisionists.

Plekhanov's writings against philosophical revisionism published in this volume are introduced by his outstanding work *Essays on the History of Materialism*, which provides an excellent historico-philosophical sketch of the development of French materialism, vividly reveals its role in the history of philosophy, and depicts the part played by Marx's materialism as the supreme achievement of materialist philosophy. Like many other works by Plekhanov, his *Essays on the History of Materialism* show him as a leading Marxist historian of philosophy. In his criticism of the neo-Kantian revision of Marxism, V. I. Lenin referred also to this book as a Marxist work containing a systematic and valuable exposition of dialectical materialism and showing that it was the logical and inevitable outcome of the most recent development of philosophy and other social sciences.

The appearance of Plekhanov's *Essays on the History of Materialism* was most timely during the struggle against philosophical

* G. V. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 427.—Ed.

reaction and the neo-Kantian revision of Marxism. Plekhanov emphasised that bourgeois historians of philosophy like Ueberweg, Lange and others were distorting the history of materialism, advancing false judgements of it, and attempting to gloss over Marx's dialectical materialism of their day. This state of affairs was typical of Russia, too, where, for instance, the reactionary journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* (Questions of Philosophy and Psychology), which was founded in 1889, was running down philosophical materialism, including Russian nineteenth-century materialism.

In criticising the bourgeois falsifiers of the history of materialism, Plekhanov's *Essays* set forth the fundamental principles of the French materialists' theory and gave a detailed and profound analysis of their socio-political views. He showed the progressiveness of Holbach and Helvetius's world-outlook, which was in keeping with the social conditions of the then revolutionary French bourgeoisie, and with the level of science during that period.

In his critical examination of the views of the French materialists, Plekhanov showed French materialism's historically inevitable limited outlook, its metaphysical character, and its inability correctly to explain the laws of social development. The French materialists were unable to eliminate the contradictions in their concept of history, which claimed that people's opinions were determined by the social environment, and the latter by people's opinions. They were unable to discover the laws governing human social life, fell into vague and muddled reflections on the qualities of human nature as the cause of social development, and in their explanations of social phenomena, came out in support of naturalism.

Plekhanov's essay on Marx shows that the development of philosophy enriched materialism with the dialectical method, that great achievement of the Hegelian philosophy. However, Hegel's dialectical method was radically refashioned by Marx who, together with Engels, gave a profound critique of Hegelian idealism. "*Lying at the foundation of our dialectics*," Plekhanov later wrote, "*is the materialist understanding of Nature. It is based on the latter; it would collapse were materialism fated to fall.*"

Plekhanov stressed the exceptional importance of the Marxist dialectical method, whose creation was a revolution in social science. In a speech "The Philosophical and Social Views of Karl Marx", Plekhanov was right in saying that "the appearance of Marx's materialist philosophy was a genuine revolution, the greatest in the history of human thought".*

* See p. 423 of this volume.—Ed.

Plekhanov showed the historical continuity between Marxism, and progressive philosophy and social science of the past; he showed that Marxism is the logical outcome of centuries of the development of human thought, having eliminated the contradictions inherent in previous theoretical thought.

In his writings, Plekhanov gave a brilliant exposition of the materialist understanding of history as discovered by Marx, and came out in defence of its principles. He underlined the tremendous effectiveness of Marxist theory, a source of boundless energy to the proletariat, and the guideline in its struggle for emancipation.

Plekhanov did much to reveal the links between Marxist theory and the proletariat's practical activities. He showed the effectiveness of that theory, calling dialectical materialism a "*philosophy of action*".

In his defence of the Marxist theory of historical materialism, Plekhanov advanced a new set of arguments, and emphasised new aspects in that theory, which had previously been insufficiently dealt with in Marxist literature. He regarded the materialist understanding of history as a scientific method leading to the establishment of the truth in the sphere of social phenomena, but in no wise as a collection of cut-and-dried conclusions. "Anyone who wishes to show himself a worthy adherent of this method should not limit himself to the simple reiteration that it is not consciousness that determines being, but being that determines consciousness; he should, on the contrary, try to understand how the determination of consciousness by being actually takes place. For that, there is no other way than the study of the facts and the establishment of their causal links."

Plekhanov thoroughly criticised the "theory of factors", employed by the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the materialist understanding of history. In his splendid article entitled "On the Materialist Understanding of History" (1897), describing the fundamental propositions of historical materialism, he made the following keen remark on the "theory of factors": "Historical 'factors' prove to be simple abstractions, and when their fog disperses, it becomes clear that men are creating, not several and separated histories—the history of law, of morals, of philosophy, and so on—but a single history of their own social relations, which are conditioned by the state of the productive forces in each given period. *What we call ideologies is merely the multiform reflections, in men's minds, of this single and indivisible history.*"*

* See p. 250 of this volume.—Ed.

In establishing the eclectic nature of the "theory of factors", Plekhanov pointed out, with full justice, that the link between phenomena in society is more profoundly understood by dialectics, which calls for the ascertainment of the fundamentals of the historical process, and for an elevation above the viewpoint of simple interaction.

By itself, he pointed out, interaction does not explain anything, so that any reference to it is simply an evasion of any reply. What is necessary is a scientific analysis of that interaction. It was that analysis that led Marx to the establishment of an indisputable truth that is confirmed by the entire practice of life: the foundations of men's social relations are provided by the productive forces, whose development causes a revolution in the relations among producers, and thereby in the entire social structure.

In a series of articles defending historical materialism, Plekhanov gave a profound criticism of "economic materialism", showing the latter as ultimately a variety of historical idealism.

Plekhanov subjected to well-grounded and profound criticism the standpoint of quietism inherent in "economic materialism", a standpoint that the enemies of Marxism ascribed to historical materialism. He emphasised that the materialist understanding of history does not in any way doom its adherents to inactivity; on the contrary, it alone creates complete and scientifically grounded confidence in the need for men to engage in active work to accelerate the historical process. It is only according to dialectical materialism that "...social relations (in *human* society) are relations between *people*; no major step in mankind's historical advance can take place without the participation, not merely of people but of a vast multitude of people, i.e., the *masses*."*

Plekhanov's criticism of "economic materialism" led him to the conclusion that its adherents in historical science ignore the role of the masses in history and could provide no explanation of men's active role in developing the productive forces and in the changes in social relations; they fell into idealism when they tried to explain the causes of the historical process. In showing the active nature of the Marx-Engels theory, Plekhanov pointed out that "...it is in the latter's theory, and only there, i.e., only in dialectical materialism, that there is no trace of fanaticism".**

In his struggle against idealism and vulgar "economic materialism" Plekhanov ascertained, in detail and in all aspects, the relatively independent development of ideologies, the invincible force of progressive ideas in the historical advance as well as

* See p. 200 of this volume.—*Ed.*

** See p. 218 of this volume.—*Ed.*

the reverse effect of ideas on society's economic basis. The idea of an advanced class, he pointed out, which is in keeping with its real economic interests, reveals a correct understanding and expression of history's actual course.

In his review of a valuable Marxist book by Labriola on historical materialism, in which Plekhanov set forth the fundamental principles of the materialist understanding of history, he correctly criticised the author's individual erroneous propositions on the role of "racial features" in the historical development of ideologies. He arrived at the conclusion that, as applied to historical peoples, "... the word *race* cannot and should not be used in respect of them in general. We do not know a single historical people that can be called a people of pure race; each of them is the outcome of very lengthy and intensive interbreeding and crossing of various ethnic elements.

In that case, how can one determine the influence of 'race' on the history of the ideologies of any people?"*

In articles written in the nineties and the early years of the present century, in which he criticised anti-Marxist theories, Plekhanov focussed his attention on expounding and defending Marx and Engels's materialist views on the historical process. Stressing the objective nature of the law-governed patterns of the historical process he analysed the causes of society's development. In striking terms, Plekhanov acquainted the reader with the fundamental propositions in Marx's Preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, namely, that economic relations among people are determined by the state of the productive forces, which, directly or indirectly, condition legal and political institutions and views, art, science, and so on.

Plekhanov followed Marx in characterising the political and legal superstructure and various forms of social consciousness and revealing their significance in the development of society's economic life. Mankind's historical development, he wrote, is marked by great and highly significant turns. This movement, however, "...never takes place on the plane of the economy alone. To go over from point *A* to point *B*, from point *B* to point *C* and so on calls each time for a rise into the "superstructure" and for certain changes to be made there. It is only after such alterations have been made that a desired point can be reached. *The road from one turning point to another always lies through the "superstructure"*. The economy hardly ever triumphs of itself; it can never be said of it: *farà da se*. No, never *da se* but always *by means of the superstructure alone*, always and *only* through certain political institutions....

* See pp. 235-36 of this volume.—Ed.

"What do a given country's political institutions hinge on? We already know that they are an expression of economic relations. For that practical expression, however, these economically prompted political institutions must first pass through the minds of people in the shape of certain *concepts*. That is why mankind, in its economic advance, can never go over from one turning point to another without first going through an entire revolution in its *concepts*."*

Following in the footsteps of Marx and Engels, Plekhanov developed their views on the active role played by ideas in the life of society. He emphasised that Marxism alone, which has understood the source ideas spring from, correctly realises the vast social force of progressive ideas in changing social relations.

In his analysis of the mode of production as the basis of society and its development, Plekhanov emphasised the inner logic in the development of the productive forces, and the active role of production relations. It is the development of the mode of production that determines the possibility and the boundaries of the influence exerted by other aspects of the material conditions of social life, and, in particular, that of the geographic environment.

However, in his propaganda of the propositions of the Marxist theory of historical materialism, Plekhanov sometimes deviated from it in dealing with the causes of the productive forces' development. His writings contain some contradictory judgements on this question, a certain exaggeration of the part played by the geographical environment in the development of society: he sometimes asserted that the development of the productive forces is determined by the properties of the geographical environment.

In an article entitled "On the Materialist Understanding of History", Plekhanov expressed an erroneous proposition regarding the origin and essence of the state. Of Labriola's statement that the state is the organised domination of one social class over another, he declared that this was not the complete truth. In Greece, Plekhanov claimed, the rise of the state should be ascribed, in considerable measure, to the need for the social division of labour. His writings provide no detailed analysis of the Marxist understanding of the state as the coercive organisation of one class's domination over another, an organisation for the suppression of the exploited classes; he merely made passing mention of this main internal function of the state in an antagonistic society.

* See p. 202 of this volume.—*Ed.*

Of particular importance in Plekhanov's writings is his elaboration of the question of the individual's role in history. His article "On the Question of the Individual's Role in History" (1898) is one of the finest expositions of a scientific posing of this problem in nineteenth-century Marxist literature.

Plekhanov always tried to deal with this question in all its aspects, with particular emphasis on the following: 1) the individual and necessity; 2) the individual and the objective law-governed pattern of the historical process; 3) the individual and historical fortuity; 4) the individual and the development of productive forces and social relations; 5) the individual's active role in the development of historical events.

In this article, so profound in content and outstanding in form, Plekhanov substantiated the Marxist solution for the problem of the individual's role in history, brought forward interesting theoretical considerations and a mass of concrete facts, and, with sparkling wit, refuted the sociological views held by neo-Kantians such as Simmel and Stammler. Plekhanov dealt in depth with the Marxist proposition on the relation between freedom and necessity, emphasising that the individual's free activities are a free and conscious expression of necessity. The consciousness of necessity makes the individual a tremendous social force, which is why "...the consciousness of the absolute necessity of a given phenomenon can only enhance energy in a man who is in sympathy with that phenomenon and regards himself as one of the forces which have brought it about".*

However influential an individual may be, he cannot change the general direction of historical development, but can, thanks to the special features of his mind and character, modify only individual features of events and some of their particular consequences. Plekhanov debunked the bourgeois cult of personality, pointing out, with every reason, that "...any talent that becomes a social force, is a product of social relations".**

At the same time, Plekhanov analysed the role of outstanding individuals, who are more keen-sighted than others, more strongly motivated and therefore aid in the accomplishment of the historic tasks set by the law-governed historical advance. An outstanding individual may exert a positive and accelerating influence, or a negative and retarding influence on the course of historical development.

In 1898 Plekhanov came out, with considerable success, against revisionism in the ranks of the German Social-Democrats. The significance of this action extended far beyond German Social-

* See p. 291 of this volume.—Ed.

** See p. 310 of this volume.—Ed.

Democracy and was an important stage of Marxism's struggle against bourgeois philosophy and its influence on the world working-class movement.

Lenin had a positive appraisal of Plekhanov's articles against Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt. In a letter to A. N. Potresov of June 27, 1899, he made the following remark: "I have read and re-read with great pleasure *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, I have read the articles by the same author in *Neue Zeit* against Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt *Neue Zeit*, No. 5, 1898-99; the later issues I have not seen, I have read Stammeler (*Wirtschaft und Recht*) whom our Kantians (P. Struve and Bulgakov) have so highly praised, and I definitely side with Monist".*

In an article entitled "Our Program", which was intended for *Rabochaya Gazeta* (Workers' Newspaper) (1899), Lenin emphasised that Plekhanov was quite right in subjecting Bernstein to scathing criticism.

Plekhanov condemned the complacency and the indifference to materialist philosophy so widespread among leaders of the German Social-Democrats and many other parties belonging to the Second International. Writing to Axelrod on February 12, 1898, he expressed surprise at the behaviour of Kautsky, who had not only been silent but had allowed the appearance, in *Neue Zeit*, of anti-Marxist articles by revisionists. Emphasising that Bernstein's articles meant a complete renunciation of revolutionary tactics and communism, Plekhanov wrote: "I want to ask Kautsky what he thinks of all this." However, he soon realised that Kautsky was opposed to any resolute acts and measures against Bernstein and his adherents, and often demanded that Plekhanov should tone down his statements against the revisionists. In a letter dated June 4th, 1898, Kautsky wrote the following to Plekhanov: "I only want to ask you to allow me to moderate the form of some of your personal attacks against Bernstein and C. Schmidt...."

The Plekhanov-Kautsky correspondence shows that the former wanted to induce Kautsky to come out with a firm criticism of the revisionists and their bourgeois teachers such as J. Wolf. Highly noteworthy in this respect is his letter to Kautsky dated May 20th, 1898, in which he asked the following: "Can you be in agreement with Bernstein? It would cause me too much pain to believe that. But if that is not the case, why don't you reply?"

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 40. By "Monist", Lenin is referring to G. V. Plekhanov, author of the book *The Development of the Monist View on History*.—Ed.

In fact, Kautsky held up publication of Plekhanov's articles in *Neue Zeit*, and subsequently even expressed regret that they had appeared in it at all.

Firmly convinced that philosophical revisionism was causing tremendous harm to the working-class movement, Plekhanov gave much thought to the struggle against Bernstein and his supporters. "From now on, this will be an all-out war; we must arm ourselves."

Even before his articles were published in *Neue Zeit* Plekhanov delivered a lecture, in Geneva, in the spring of 1898, "On the Alleged Crisis in Marxism". In it he criticised philosophical revisionism and, at the same time, gave a political appraisal of the anti-Marxist collusion between the bourgeois liberals and revisionists. Plekhanov was quite right in emphasising that such bourgeois ideologists as Brentano, Wolf and Schultze-Gävernitz had, by their "criticism" of Marxism, laid the ground for the revisionists' views, in particular, those of Bernstein.

In July 1898, *Neue Zeit* carried an article by Plekhanov entitled "Bernstein and Materialism", and, in October of the same year, an article against Conrad Schmidt. These were followed by a series of other articles.

In his struggle against the philosophical revisionism of E. Bernstein, C. Schmidt, and their ilk, Plekhanov revealed the social and political significance of neo-Kantianism's attraction for bourgeois ideologists, and of their struggle against materialism. "The bourgeoisie's aversion from materialism," he wrote, "and its predilection for Kant's philosophy can be very well explained by the present-day *state of society*. In Kant's doctrine the bourgeoisie see a powerful 'spiritual weapon' in the struggle against the ultimate aspirations of the working class."*

Plekhanov spoke of C. Schmidt's vain attempts to discredit Marx and Engels's criticism of Kantianism. He supplemented his "logical criticism" of Kant's philosophy and its latest followers by showing that philosophy's class roots.

Criticising the philosophical views of E. Bernstein and C. Schmidt, Plekhanov showed that materialism and Kantian idealism could never be reconciled, and popularised the propositions advanced by the founders of Marxism on the primacy of matter and the secondary nature of consciousness, the authenticity of cognition, and the role of men's practical activities in the process of cognition.

Plekhanov tried unsuccessfully to publish, in *Neue Zeit*, an article "Cant against Kant, or Herr Bernstein's Will and Testament", which was a defence of materialist dialectics. In a note

* See p. 397 of this volume.—Ed.

to Plekhanov's article "Materialism or Kantianism", the *Neue Zeit* editors wrote the following: "We have decided to discontinue the discussion on this subject in view of the shortage of space occasioned by an abundance of material received." Thus, Kautsky discontinued publication of Plekhanov's articles against revisionism. His article "Cant against Kant" was published in 1901 in *Zarya* (The Dawn), theoretical journal of the Russian Marxists, which was edited by Lenin.

In his struggle against the revisionists, Plekhanov defended the Marxist dialectical method, unmasked the revisionists' metaphysics and sophistry, explained and gave concrete shape to the fundamental principles of materialist dialectics, and underlined its revolutionary content.

He criticised pedestrian evolutionism in its application to the historical process, and called for a dialectical approach to the study of history. He saw Marxist dialectics as the algebra of revolution and a profound substantiation of revolutionary upheavals in society. In his words, the revelation of concrete truth as the result of an all-round study of an object's actual properties is one of the distinctive features of dialectics.

Together with his defence of philosophical materialism and Marxist dialectics, Plekhanov repelled revisionist attacks against historical materialism, and showed that the materialist understanding of history is the latter's only scientific explanation.

He criticised Bernstein for his rejection of the Marxist theory of the class struggle and revolution. "If," he wrote, "Herr Bernstein has rejected *materialism* so as to avoid 'threatening' one of the 'ideological interests' of the bourgeoisie known as *religion*, his rejection of *dialectics* has resulted from his non-desire to frighten the selfsame bourgeoisie with the 'horrors of violent revolution'."*

Plekhanov's attacks against philosophical revisionism were highly important in defending Marxist philosophy and enhancing its influence on the international working-class movement.

Though Plekhanov criticised the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism, there were some errors in his writings.

He made concessions to agnosticism in some questions of the theory of knowledge. Thus, in his polemic with Bernstein and Schmidt, he gave an erroneous formulation of the incognisability of the essence of matter.** In an article entitled "Materialism Yet Again" (1899), he again advanced certain propositions in

* See p. 369 of this volume.—Ed.

** See pp. 320-21 of this volume.—Ed.

the spirit of the "theory of hieroglyphics", which was a concession to agnosticism.

Despite these errors and shortcomings in Plekhanov's criticism of revisionism, his attacks against the Kantian idealism of the "legal Marxists" and the Bernsteinians were outstanding events in the life of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

In an open letter to Kautsky, "What Should We Thank Him For?", which was published in *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*, and was a defence of Marx's scientific socialism, Plekhanov wrote that it was now a question of "...who is to bury whom, *whether Bernstein will bury Social-Democracy or Social-Democracy will bury Bernstein*".* He proved that Bernstein was following in the footsteps of the bourgeois "savants" in their rejection of Marx's theory of scientific communism, and that the revisionist's hackneyed arguments contained nothing that had not been previously advanced by Marxism's bourgeois opponents.

The contemptible speech made by Kautsky at the Stuttgart Parteitag in defence of Bernstein evoked indignation among the revolutionary section of international Social-Democracy, and approval from the opportunists.

Plekhanov exerted a notable influence on the Left-wing elements in German Social-Democracy. His articles in *Neue Zeit* were followed up by articles against Bernstein and other revisionists, written by Franz Mehring, who expressed solidarity with what Plekhanov had said.

Plekhanov demanded Bernstein's expulsion from the Social-Democratic Party. In 1903, Plekhanov wrote the following in *Iskra*, in opposition to a conciliatory attitude towards the revisionists: "The international admirers of 'a friendly attitude in polemics' are incapable of understanding that, in essence, the 'orthodox' are in no way friends to the revisionists, and must wage a mortal struggle against the latter, if only they do not wish to betray their own cause."

Plekhanov's criticism of the revisionists was an important factor in the revolutionary Social-Democrats' struggle against opportunism in the Second International. As Lenin wrote, "...the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement to criticise the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov".**

In the early years of the century, Plekhanov took steps to have his critical articles against the revisionists published in the Russian press. This was required by the vital interests of the Russian working-class movement, inasmuch as Bernstein's revision of Marxism had met with full approval, not only from

* See p. 351 of this volume.—Ed.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 33.—Ed.

the "legal Marxists", those ideologists of the liberal bourgeoisie, but also from the opportunists in the working-class movement—the Economists. The Economists declared themselves adherents of Bernstein. The "legal Marxists" had previously begun to revise revolutionary Marxism along the lines later followed by Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt. "As for your polemics with Schmidt," the "legal Marxist" Bulgakov wrote to Plekhanov on November 20th, 1898, "you are aware that I hold a philosophical stand different from yours.... Regarding your polemic with Bernstein in *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*, I must tell you, in all frankness, that I am not on your side."

In Russia, a united front against the revolutionary Social-Democrats was formed, by the Economists and the "legal Marxists", who upheld Bernsteinian platform. "The struggle against Bernsteinianism in Russia," Plekhanov wrote to Axelrod on April 21st, 1899, "is the most urgent task of the moment.... To the influence of our *Kathedern-Marxists*, we must contrapose our influence as *revolutionary Marxists*."

With this purpose in view, Plekhanov came out, in the early years of the century, with a series of articles against the "legal Marxists" and the Economists, and in defence of Marxist theory. In the Preface to the second Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1900), and in his articles against Struve, Plekhanov examined the most fundamental problems of the Marxist theory, in particular, its theory of the class struggle. At the same time, he went into the content of the views held by the predecessors of Marxism, giving an appraisal of the views held by the utopian socialist Saint-Simon and the post-Restoration historians A. Thierry, Mignet and Guizot. However, in characterising the views of the precursors of Marx and Engels, Plekhanov at times excessively approximated their views with the Marxist theory of the class struggle, without due emphasis of the qualitative distinction. Thus, he wrote the following: "Marx and Engels's view on the class struggle, the significance of politics in that struggle, and the dependence of the state power on the ruling classes is identical with the views of Guizot and his fellow-thinkers harboured on the matter, the only difference being that they stood for the interests of the proletariat, while the others defended the interests of the bourgeoisie."*

In his exposition of the fundamental Marxist propositions on the class struggle, Plekhanov emphasised that the class struggle is a universal consequence of the division of society into classes, and that the workers' class struggle leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, the mode of whose implementation, in Plekhanov's opinion, depended on a number of circumstances.

* See p. 449 of this volume.—Ed.

"And it is precisely because the Social-Democrats cannot foresee all the circumstances in which the working class will have to win its *supremacy*, they cannot, in principle, reject the *violent mode of action*."*

Questions of the proletariat's class struggle and the social revolution came in for considerable attention in Plekhanov's articles against Struve, which were first published in *Zarya* in 1901-02.

Plekhanov came out against Struve somewhat belatedly. He was silent, and refrained from any polemic with Struve in the mid-nineties, when Lenin was waging an acute struggle against the "legal Marxists". Plekhanov had not yet come out against "legal Marxism" in 1894, when Lenin gave his detailed criticism of Struve's bourgeois-liberal views. In the course of the polemic with the Narodniks, he tried to defend Struve's work *Critical Notes on the Question of Russia's Economic Development*, revealing an inability to understand the bourgeois meaning of Struve's slogan: "Let us learn from capitalism." An analysis of the correspondence between the "legal Marxists" and Plekhanov shows that, in the nineties, he did not see them as enemies to Marxism, and counted on working together with them. At the time, he considered the "legal Marxists" firm allies of the revolutionary Marxists, while Lenin allowed the possibility only of temporary agreements with them.

When he was exiled to a distant part of Siberia, Lenin expressed the wish that the revolutionary Social-Democratic forces should begin a struggle against neo-Kantianism, which was being used by the enemies of Marxism as a philosophical foundation for the struggle against the latter. In this connection he wrote, in September 1898: "...I am extremely surprised that the author of *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus* has not expressed his opinion in the Russian literature and does not vigorously oppose neo-Kantianism, letting Struve and Bulgakov polemicise on specific questions of this philosophy, as if it had already become part of the views of Russian disciples."**

Subsequently, in his articles against Struve, Plekhanov had to acknowledge his error, stating that he had unjustifiably held that "bourgeois theory in his" (Struve's—*B.C.*) "views would be gradually overcome by the element of *Marxism* present in them."***

Under Lenin's influence, Plekhanov published a number of articles against Struve, in the early years of the century.

Of great significance to the Marxist party in Russia and to the working-class movement abroad was Plekhanov's defence, in

* See p. 468 of this volume.—*Ed.*

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 26.—*Ed.*

*** See p. 487-88 of this volume.—*Ed.*

these articles, of the materialist understanding of history, and the application of materialist dialectics to an analysis of social relations in the second half of the nineteenth century.

As Lenin pointed out as far back as 1894, "legal Marxism" was a direct reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature. With the help of Bernsteinianism, it developed into a typical bourgeois-liberal trend. Bernstein's attack against Marxism was a source of great encouragement to the "legal Marxists" who, in their turn, raised a hullabaloo in the press on the question of Bernsteinianism, in whose emergence they saw proof that their revisionist views were correct.

Struve summed up his revision of the Marxist doctrine in his article "Marx's Theory of Social Development", which was published in 1899 in the German bourgeois journal *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik*. In it he frankly stated that his article had been written under the direct impression of Bernstein's booklet.

Plekhanov's three articles against Struve traced the evolution of the latter's anti-Marxist views, and subjected them to a thorough criticism, revealing the theoretical foundations of Struve's revision of Marx's theory of revolution, and arriving at the conclusion that the viewpoint of the Brentano bourgeois school was predominant in his views. Struve's metaphysical posing of the contradictions between law and the economy was utterly confusing and obscured the problem of the contradiction between society's productive forces and its economic structure.

Criticising Struve's anti-Marxist views on the blunting of contradictions in present-day society, Plekhanov contraposed to his assertions historical facts that showed that social development is effected through an exacerbation of contradictions. On the basis of convincing examples, he showed that a further aggravation of the contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations was taking place in capitalist society, whence he concluded that contemporary history too was developing according to the law of the aggravation of contradictions, not of their blunting.

Plekhanov was right when he pointed out that Struve was neither the first nor the last to uphold the theory that the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were "blunting", a concept which had become widespread among bourgeois ideologists under the label of "critical" socialism. "The 'blunting' of the contradiction between the capitalists and the workers is now a theme very much in vogue in bourgeois economic literature."*

* See p. 519 of this volume.—Ed.

In rejecting the views of the bourgeois economists Goschen, Schultze-Gävernitz and Melgaulle, those adherents of the Bastiat school, Plekhanov drew the conclusion, on the basis of facts and figures, that, considered from their economic aspect, social contradictions were growing more and more and the inequality in the distribution of the national income was mounting, as was the degree of the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. "...The working class," he wrote, "has become *relatively* poorer because its *share* of the national product has decreased relatively."* The worsening conditions of the workers, Plekhanov said, has acquired an absolute character in certain times and places. The contemporary scene was bearing out the universal law Marx had discovered of capitalist accumulation and the aggravation of class contradictions.

At the same time, Plekhanov skilfully unmasked the philosophical "grounds" for Struve's revision of the Marxist theory of revolution. With the aid of the Kantian principle of the gradualness of change, Struve attempted to prove the impossibility of the social revolution; he rejected the dialectical theory of leaps, which he proposed replacing with the metaphysical principle of gradualness.

In contrast with Struve and the other "legal Marxists", Plekhanov defended and substantiated the viewpoint of Marxist dialectics on the question of leaps, showing that the latter are inherent in reality itself and that leaps are essential even in the process of social reforms; the dialectical law of the transition of quantitative changes into fundamental and qualitative changes by means of a leap is a universal one. Plekhanov revealed the social and political meaning of the campaign waged against dialectics by Struve, Berdayev, and other opponents of Marxism. Like the Bernsteinians, the "legal Marxists" adopted, in their "denials" of the Marxist theory of revolution, the vulgar evolutionary principle of the "universally lawful form" of any change in phenomena; it was their aim to proclaim social reform the only possible road of development, thus rejecting the social revolution.

In refuting Struve's arguments, Plekhanov wrote the following ironical words: "...yet Mr. P. Struve has undertaken to prove to us that Nature makes no leaps and that the intellect does not tolerate them. How can that be? Or perhaps he has in view only his own intellect, which indeed *does not tolerate leaps* for the simple reason that he, as they say, '*cannot tolerate*' the dictatorship of the proletariat."**

* See p. 548 of this volume.—Ed.

** See p. 569 of this volume.—Ed.

Plekhanov's criticism of neo-Kantian ethical socialism is among Plekhanov's finest writings against the enemies of Marxism. To divorce socialism from science, convert it into an "ethical ideal" that stood aside from real life, from the proletariat's struggle for revolution and the conquest of political power—such was the task pursued by the bourgeois "criticism" of Marxism. An "ethicising of socialism" meant, first and foremost, a struggle against the Marxist theory of revolution and proletarian dictatorship. The revisionists were out to substitute, for Marx's scientific socialism, the saccharine preaching of a peaceful aspiration towards the socialist ideal.

"To us, a patently unachievable ideal is not an ideal," wrote Plekhanov, "but simply an immoral *trifle*. It is the *reality of the future* that is *our ideal*, that of revolutionary Social-Democracy."*

Plekhanov showed that the ideals of Marxism are grounded in science, the adherents of Marxism regarding the achievement of their ideal as a matter of historical necessity. "Defending the future of the movement," he pointed out, "means fighting for its 'ultimate aims', fighting now—today, tomorrow, and on the next day, and at any minute."**

Plekhanov exposed the sophistic methods used by the opponents of Marxism, and their striving to contrast to the real and revolutionary Marx another Marx whom they had invented—"Marx the reformer". The revisionists ejected from Marxism, one after another, all its major propositions, which are the spiritual weapon of the proletariat in its revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Among such propositions, Plekhanov pointed out, are: dialectics; materialism; the theory of social contradictions as an incentive to social development; the theory of value; the theory of surplus-value; the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This emasculation of the theory of Marxism is a bourgeois parody of Marxism.

Plekhanov's articles against Struve and other bourgeois "critics" were not free of shortcomings, in particular, of certain elements of the abstract and the academic. In his criticism of Struve, he did not deal with the concrete historical conditions of social development, or with the struggle against opportunism in Russia; neither did he analyse the class roots of "legal Marxism". In profundity and effectiveness, Plekhanov's statements against "legal Marxism" fell short of the decisive criticism to which Lenin subjected the "legal Marxists" as early as 1894-95.

On the whole, however, Plekhanov's articles against Struve

* See p. 583 of this volume.—*Ed.*

** See p. 588 of this volume.—*Ed.*

are an important theoretical document produced by revolutionary Marxism.

It is noteworthy that, while they were members of *Iskra's* editorial board, Plekhanov and Lenin conducted a lively correspondence, in which Lenin made a number of remarks concerning Plekhanov's articles against Bernstein and Struve. "Thank you so much," Plekhanov wrote to Lenin, "for your remark about my article against Bernstein."

Despite their errors and certain departures from Marxism, Plekhanov's philosophical writings between the mid-nineties and 1903, i.e., during the preparations to set up a Marxist working-class party in Russia, devoted to the defence, substantiation and development of the ideas of dialectical and historical materialism, and the struggle against the bourgeois liberals and revisionists, were, in their entirety, a firm achievement of Marxist theory.

However, already on the eve of the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (1903), Plekhanov showed certain departures from revolutionary Marxism in political questions. He overestimated the liberal bourgeoisie's role and failed to understand the proletariat's guiding role in the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolutions and the significance of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

These errors led Plekhanov to political and tactical opportunism, to his assuming the position of Menshevism—that opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Plekhanov, who was one of the political leaders and theorists of the Second International, failed to understand the essence of the new historical epoch that began at the turn of the century; he was unable to creatively apply Marxism to the conditions of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. The erroneous political views held by the leaders and theorists of the Second International, and their tolerance of opportunism were inherent in Plekhanov, in one degree or another. Plekhanov's wrong solution for the major political and theoretical problems of the Russian and the world revolution were also linked with his isolation from the practice of the working-class movement in Russia. He did not discern the radical changes that the new historical period had brought into the Russian working-class movement, and failed to understand that the centre of the revolutionary movement had shifted from West to East—to Russia.

While ruthlessly criticising Plekhanov's political opportunism, Lenin never lost sight of his services to Marxist theory. Lenin saw in Plekhanov a militant defender of Marxist philosophy and its outstanding theorist. "The services he rendered in the past,"

Lenin wrote of Plekhanov, "were immense. During the twenty years between 1883 and 1903 he wrote a large number of splendid essays, especially those against the opportunists, Machists and Narodniks."*

Lenin saw in Plekhanov's writings the finest exposition of Marxist philosophy, especially of historical materialism hitherto written; he pointed out that an entire generation of Russian Marxists had learnt from Plekhanov's works. In an appraisal of Plekhanov's philosophical heritage, Lenin wrote in 1921: "...Let me add in parenthesis for the benefit of young Party members that you *cannot* hope to become a *real*, intelligent communist without making a study—and I mean *study*—of all of Plekhanov's philosophical writings, because nothing better has been written on Marxism anywhere in the world."**

B. Chagin

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 358.

** *ibid.*, Vol. 32, p. 94.

**SELECTED
PHILOSOPHICAL
WORKS**

**VOLUME
II**

ESSAYS ON THE HISTORY OF MATERIALISM

PREFACE

In the three essays I am submitting for appraisal by the German reader, I have attempted to interpret and expound Karl Marx's materialist understanding of history, which is one of the greatest achievements of nineteenth-century theoretical thought.

I am well aware that this is a very modest contribution: to provide convincing proof of all the value and all the significance of that understanding of history a full history of materialism would have to be written. Since I am not in a position to write that work, I have had to limit myself to a comparison, in several monographs, of eighteenth-century French materialism with today's.

Of all the representatives of French materialism, I have chosen Holbach and Helvetius, who, in my opinion, are in many respects outstanding thinkers who have not been duly appreciated to this day.

Helvetius has been impugned many a time; he has often been slandered, but few have gone to the trouble of trying to understand him. When I set about describing his writings and giving a critique of them, I had to turn virgin soil, if I may be permitted to use the expression. The only guidelines I could use were several cursory remarks I had come upon in the works of Hegel and Marx. It is not for me to judge in what measure I have made proper use of what I have borrowed from these great teachers in the realm of philosophy.

Even in his lifetime, Holbach, who was less bold as a logician and less of a revolutionary thinker than Helvetius, shocked others far less than the author of *De l'Esprit* ever did. He was not feared as much as the latter was; he was held in less disfavour, and got more fair play. Yet he, too, was only half-understood.

Like any other modern philosophical system, materialist philosophy has had to provide an explanation of two kinds of phenomena: on the one hand, Nature's; on the other, those of mankind's historical development. The materialist philosophers of the eighteenth century—at least, those who stood close to Locke—

had their own philosophy of history, in the same measure as they had a philosophy of Nature. To see that, one has only to read their writings with a modicum of attention. Therefore, the historians of philosophy should certainly set forth the French materialists' ideas on history, and subject them to criticism just as they have done with their understanding of Nature. That task has not been accomplished however. Thus, for instance, when the historians of philosophy speak of Holbach, they usually give consideration only to his *Système de la Nature*, in which work they investigate only whatever has a bearing on the philosophy of Nature, and *morals*. They ignore Holbach's historical views, which are scattered so plentifully throughout *Système de la Nature* and his other works. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the public at large having not the least idea of those views, and having an entirely incomplete and false impression of Holbach. If one also takes into account that the French materialists' ethics has almost invariably been misinterpreted, it has to be acknowledged that very much in the history of eighteenth-century French materialism stands in need of amendment.

It should also be remembered that the approach we have mentioned is to be met, not only in general courses in the history of philosophy but also in specialist writings on the history of materialism (which, incidentally, are still few in number), examples being the classical work of Friedrich Albert Lange, in German, and a book by the Frenchman Jules-Auguste Soury.¹

As for Marx, it will suffice to say that neither the historians of philosophy in general nor the historians of materialism in particular have gone to the trouble or even making mention of his materialist understanding of history.

If a board is warped, the distortion can be rectified by bending it in the opposite direction. That is how I have been constrained to act in these *Essays*: I have had, first and foremost, to describe the historical views of the thinkers I am dealing with.

From the viewpoint of the school of thought I have the honour of belonging to, "*the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought*".² Whoever wishes to regard the history of ideas from this point of view should try to explain how and in what manner the ideas of any period have been engendered by its social conditions, that is to say, ultimately by its economic relations. To provide such an explanation is a vast and noble task, whose accomplishment will utterly transform the history of *ideologies*. In these *Essays*, I have attempted an approach towards the accomplishment of that task. However, I have not been able to devote sufficient attention to it, and that for a very simple reason: before answering the question *why* the development of ideas has proceeded

Beiträge
zur
Geschichte des Materialismus

Von
Georg Plechanow

I. Holbach. II. Helvetius. III. Marx.

Stuttgart
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Title page of the first edition
of *Essays on the History of Materialism*

in a definite way, one must first learn *how* that development has taken place. In respect of the subject of these *Essays*, that means that an explanation of *why materialist philosophy developed in the way* it did with Holbach and Helvetius in the eighteenth century, and with Marx in the nineteenth, is possible only after it is clearly shown *what that philosophy was in reality* which has been so often misunderstood and even quite distorted. *The ground must be cleared before building can begin.*

Another few words. The reader may find that I have dealt at insufficient length with these thinkers' theory of cognition. To that I can object that I have done all I can to set forth their views in this respect with accuracy. However, since I do not number myself among the adherents of the theoretico-cognitive scholasticism that is in such vogue today, I have had no intention of dwelling on this absolutely secondary question.

Geneva, New Year's Day, 1896

G. Plekhanov

I

HOLBACH

We are going to speak of a certain materialist.

But first: what is meant by materialism?

Let us address ourselves to the greatest of modern materialists.

"The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being," says Frederick Engels in his excellent book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, (Stuttgart, 1888). "But this question could for the first time be put forward in its whole acuteness, could achieve its full significance, only after humanity in Europe had awakened from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages. The question of the position of thinking in relation to being, a question which, by the way, had played a great part also in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, the question: which is primary, spirit or nature—that question, in relation to the church, was sharpened into this: Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?

"The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to various schools of materialism."³

Holbach would have accepted this definition of materialism with the utmost readiness. He himself said nothing else. To him, what we call the mental life of animals was nothing more than a natural phenomenon, and, in his opinion, there was no need to emerge from within the borders of Nature in search of a solution to the problems she has confronted us with.* This is very simple, and a far cry from the dogmatic assertions so often and so groundlessly ascribed to the materialists. True, Holbach saw in Nature

* Cf. *Le bon sens puisé dans la nature*, suivi du testament du curé Meslier, à Paris, l'an 1^{er} de la République. I, p. 175.

nothing but matter or *kinds of matter*, and motion or *motions*.* And it is on this that the critics, Ph. Damiron for example, are out to entrap our materialist. They foist upon him their concept of matter and, proceeding from that concept, attempt triumphantly to prove that matter, alone, is insufficient for an explanation of all natural phenomena.**

This is a facile but threadbare device. Critics of this calibre do not understand, or pretend not to understand, that one may have a concept of matter different from theirs. "If, by Nature," Holbach says, "we shall mean an accumulation of dead substances, without any properties and purely passive, then, of course, we shall be obliged to seek outside of that Nature the principle of her motions; but if, by Nature, we mean what she actually is—a whole, in which the various parts have various properties, act according to those various properties, are constantly acting and reacting upon one another, possess weight, gravitate towards a common centre, while others depart towards the circumference; attract and repel one another, unite and separate, and, in constant collisions and comings together, produce and decompose all the bodies we see—then nothing can make us appeal to super-natural forces for an explanation of how the things and phenomena that we see are formed.***

Locke already thought it possible that matter could possess the faculty of thinking. To Holbach, this was a most probable assumption "even in the hypothesis of theology, that is to say, in supposing that there exists an omnipotent mover of matter".**** The conclusion drawn by Holbach is very simple and really very convincing: "Since Man, who is matter and has ideas only about matter, possesses the faculty of thinking, matter can think, or is capable of that specific modification which we call thought."*****

* "Nature, understood in the broadest sense of the word, is a vast whole resultant from a compound of different substances, their different combinations and different motions, as observed by us in the Universe." (*Système de la Nature ou des Loix du Monde Physique et du Monde Moral*, Londres, 1781, I, p. 3). Holbach also recognised four elements, which the ancient philosophy recognised before him: air, fire, earth and water.

** Thus, according to Damiron, matter cannot possess the faculty of thinking. Why? Because "matter does not think, does not cognise, does not act" (*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la philosophie au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1858, p. 409).

What amazing logic! Incidentally, in their struggle against the materialists, Voltaire and Rousseau were also in error in this question. Thus, for instance, Voltaire assured the reader that "any active matter reveals its non-material essence, which acts upon it". To Rousseau matter was "dead"; he could never "imagine a live molecule".

*** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 21. The quotation is from the 1781 edition.

**** *Le bon sens*, I, p. 176.

***** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 81. Note 26.

What does that modification depend on? Here Holbach advances two hypotheses, which he finds equally probable. It may be presumed that the sensitivity of matter is "the result of an organisation, a link inherent in an animal, so that dead and inert matter ceases to be dead and becomes capable of sensation when it is 'animalised', i.e. when it unites and is identified with an animal". Do we not see every day that milk, bread and wine turn into the substance of man, who is a creature endowed with sensitivity? These dead substances consequently become endowed with sensitivity when they combine with a creature that is endowed with sensitivity. The other hypothesis is that dealt with by Diderot in his excellent *Conversation with D'Alembert*. "Some philosophers think that sensitivity is a universal quality of matter. In this case, it would be useless to seek whence that quality comes to it, which we know by its effects. If one admits that hypothesis, then it will be in the same way as one distinguishes two kinds of motion in Nature—one that is known under the name of *living* force and another under the name of *dead* force—then one will distinguish two kinds of sensitivity: one that is active or living, and another that is inert or dead, and then animalising a substance will mean nothing but destroying the obstacles that prevent it from being active and sensitive." However that may be, and whichever of these hypotheses of sensitivity we accept, "the non-extensive being the human soul is supposed to be cannot be a subject".*

The reader will perhaps claim that neither hypothesis is marked by sufficient clarity. We are well aware of that, and Holbach realised it no less than we do. That property of matter which we call sensitivity is an enigma that is very difficult of solution. But, says Holbach, "the simplest movements of our bodies are, to any man who gives thought to them, enigmas just as difficult to solve as thought is."**

During a conversation with Lessing, Jacobi once said, "Spinoza is good enough in my opinion, yet his name is a poor kind of salvation for us!" To which Lessing replied, "Yes! If you wish it so!... Yet ... do you know of anything better?"***

To all reproaches from their opponents, the materialists can reply in just the same way: "Do you know of anything better?"

* *Système de la Nature*, I, pp. 90-91. La Mettrie also considers the two hypotheses almost equally probable. Lange has been *totally wrong* in ascribing a different opinion to him. This will be seen from a perusal of Chapter VI of *Traité de l'âme*. La Mettrie even supposes that "the philosophers of all ages" (with the exception of the Cartesians, of course) "recognised that matter had the faculty of sensation" (Cf. *Œuvres*, Amsterdam, 1764, I, pp. 97-100).

** *Le bon sens*, I, p. 177.

*** *Jacobi's Werke*, IV, S. 54.

Where is that something better to be sought? In Berkeley's subjective idealism? In Hegel's absolute idealism? In the agnosticism or the neo-Kantianism of our times?

"Materialism," Lange assures us, "stubbornly takes the world of sensory appearance for the world of real things."*

He wrote this remark apropos of Holbach's argument against Berkeley. It creates the impression that Holbach was ignorant of many very simple things. Our philosopher could have replied for himself, "We do not know the essence of any being, if by the word 'essence' one understands that which constitutes the nature that is peculiar to it; we know matter only through the perceptions, the sensations, and the ideas it gives us; it is only later that we judge whether it is good or bad, in accordance with the structure of our organs."**

"We know neither the essence nor the true nature of matter, although we are able to define some of its properties and qualities according to how it affects us."***

"We do not know the elements of the body, but we do know some of their properties or qualities and we distinguish between their different substances according to the effects or changes they produce on our senses, that is to say, by the various changes that their presence brings forth in us."****

Strange, is it not? Here we see our kindly old Holbach as an epistemologist of today. How was it that Lange failed to recognise in him a comrade-in-philosophy?

Lange saw all philosophical systems in Kant, in just the same way as Malebranche saw all things in God. He found it unimaginable that, even before the publication of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*⁴, there could have been people, and even among the materialists, who had a knowledge of certain truths, which were, properly speaking, meagre and barren, but seemed to him the greatest discoveries in contemporary philosophy. He had read Holbach with a prejudiced eye.

But that is not all. There is a vast difference between Holbach and Lange. To Lange, as to any Kantian, a "*thing-in-itself*" was absolutely incognisable. To Holbach, as to any materialist, our reason, i.e., science, was fully capable of discovering *at least certain properties of a "thing-in-itself"*. On this point, too, the author of *Système de la Nature* was not mistaken.

Let us apply the following line of reasoning. We are building a railway. Expressed in Kantian terms, that means we are engendering certain *phenomena*. But what is a phenomenon? It is the

* *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 2. Aufl., Iserlohn, 1873, I, S. 378.

** *Système de la Nature*, II, pp. 91-92.

*** *ibid.*, p. 116.

**** *ibid.*, I, p. 28.

result of a "thing-in-itself" acting upon us. So when we are building our railway, we are making a "thing-in-itself" act *on* us in a certain way that is desirable *to* us. But what is it that gives us the means of acting upon a "thing-in-itself" in such a manner? It is a knowledge of its properties, and nothing but that knowledge.

Our being able to get a sufficiently close knowledge of a "thing-in-itself" happens to be very useful to us. Otherwise, we could not exist here on Earth, and would most probably have been denied the pleasure of indulging in metaphysics.

The Kantians aver that a "thing-in-itself" is incognisable. That incognisability, in their opinion, gives Lampe, and all the worthies of philistinism, the inalienable right to their own more or less "poetical" or "ideal" God.⁵ Holbach reasoned differently.

"It is being incessantly repeated to us," he says, "that our senses show us only the *outside* of things, and that our limited minds cannot conceive a God. Let us admit that is so; but those senses do not show us even the *outside* of the Divinity.... As we are constituted, that means that we have no ideas about what does not exist for us."*

The almost complete absence of any kind of idea of evolution was undoubtedly a weak point in eighteenth-century French materialism, as it was, in general, in any kind of materialism prior to Marx. True, such people as Diderot sometimes arrived at masterly conjectures which would have done credit to the most outstanding of our present-day evolutionists; such instances of insight, however, were not connected with the essence of their doctrine, but were merely exceptions, which, as such, merely confirmed the rule. Whether they were dealing with Nature, morals or history, the "philosophers" tackled the problem with the same absence of the dialectical method, and from the same metaphysical viewpoint. It is of interest to see how indefatigably Holbach tried to find some probable hypothesis of the origin of our planet and the human race. Problems now conclusively resolved by evolutionary

* *Système de la Nature*, II, pp. 109-13. Feuerbach said the same thing. In general, his critique of religion contains much that resembles Holbach's. As for the conversion of a "thing-in-itself" into God, it is noteworthy that the Fathers of the Church defined their God in exactly the same way as the Kantians define their "thing-in-itself". Thus, according to St. Augustine, God does not fit into any category: "ut sic intelligamus Deum, si possumus, quantum possumus, sine qualitate bonum, sine quantitate magnum, sine indigentia creatorem, sine situ praesidentem, sine loco ubique totum, sine tempore sempiternum". "So this may be our notion of God, if and so far as it be within our powers, a creator wanting in nothing, good without quality, great without quantity, present without abode, whole everywhere without location, everlasting without time." (Cf. Ueberweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Berlin, 1881, II.) We shall refer to Hegel those readers who would like to get an idea of all the contradictions of a "thing-in-itself".⁶

natural science were seen as impossible of solution by the eighteenth-century philosophers.*

The Earth was not always the same as it now is. Does that mean that it was formed gradually, during a lengthy process of evolution? No. It *might* have been as follows: "Perhaps this Earth is a mass detached at a certain moment from some other celestial body; perhaps it is the result" (!) "of the spots or crusts that astronomers observe on the Sun's disc, whence they could spread in our planetary system; perhaps this globe is an extinct and displaced comet which once occupied a different place in the regions of space."**

Primitive man perhaps differed from his counterpart of today more than a quadruped does from an insect. Like everything else that exists on our globe and on all other heavenly bodies, Man can be imagined as being in a process of constant change. "Thus there is no contradiction in thinking that the species vary incessantly."*** This sounds perfectly in the spirit of evolutionism. It should not be forgotten, however, that Holbach saw this hypothesis as probable given "*changes in the position of our globe*". Whoever does not accept this condition can consider Man "*a sudden result of Nature*." Holbach does not adhere quite firmly to the hypothesis of the evolution of the species. "If one should reject the preceding conjectures, and if one affirms that Nature acts by a certain sum of immutable and general laws; if one should believe that Man, the quadruped, the fish, the insect, the plant, etc., are of all eternity and will forever remain what they are; if one should grant that the stars have shone in the firmament since all eternity" (thus, "a certain sum of immutable and general laws" would consequently preclude any development!—*G.P.*); "if one should say that it should not be asked why Man is what he is, any more than why Nature is as we see it, or why the world exists—we would not object to all that. Whatever system one adopts, it will, perhaps, reply equally well to the difficulties that embarrass one.... It is not given to Man to know everything; it is not given to him to know his origin; it is not given to him to penetrate into the essence of things or to reach the prime principles."****

All this seems almost unbelievable to us today, but one should not forget the history of natural science. It should be recalled that,

* It is really surprising that Diderot admires the *moral doctrine of Heraclitus*, but says nothing of his dialectics, or, if you wish, merely a few insignificant words, in considering his *physics*. *Œuvres de Diderot*, Paris, 1818, II, pp. 625-26 (*Encyclopédie*).

** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 70.

*** *ibid.*, p. 73.

**** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 75. Among the problems whose solution is not given to Man, Holbach also includes the question, "What came first: the animal before the egg, or the egg before the animal?" This is a caution to scholars who like to expatiate on the uncrossable borderlines of science!

long after the publication of *Système de la Nature*, the great scientist Cuvier was up in arms against any idea of evolution in the natural sciences.

Let us now consider Holbach's moral philosophy.

In one of his comedies, Charles Palissot, an author who has been completely forgotten, but attracted considerable attention in the last century, has one of his characters (Valère) say the following:

*Du globe ou nous vivons despote universel,
Il n'est qu'un seul ressort, l'intérêt personnel.**

To which another character (Carondas) replies:

*J'avais quelque regret à tromper Cydalise
Mais je vois clairement que la chose est permise.***

Thus Palissot tried to hold up the philosophers' ideas to scorn. "*It is a question of achieving happiness, no matter how*"—this aphorism of Valère expresses Palissot's view of the "philosophers'" ethics. Palissot was merely a "*miserable ink-slinger*", yet were there many writers on the history of philosophy who advanced any other judgement on the materialist ethics of the eighteenth century? Throughout the present century, this ethics has almost universally been considered something *scandalous*, a doctrine unbecoming a worthy scholar or self-respecting philosopher; people such as La Mettrie, Holbach and Helvetius were considered dangerous sophists who preached nothing but sensual enjoyment and selfishness.*** Yet none of these writers ever preached anything of the kind. Any reading of their books with a modicum of attention will bear this out. "To do good, promote the happiness of others, and to come to their aid—that is virtuous. Only that can be virtuous which is conducive to the weal, happiness and security of society."

"*Humaneness* is the prime social virtue. It epitomises all the other virtues. Taken in its broadest aspect, it is the sense that gives all beings of our species the rights to our heart. Grounded in a cultivated sensibility, it enables us to do all the good our faculties render us capable of. It results in love, beneficence, generosity, forbearance and compassion to our fellow-creatures."****

* [Universal despot of the world we live in and sole motive of everything—personal Interest.]

** [I have some regret at deceiving Cydalise, But I see clearly that the thing is permitted.]

*** "De La Mettrie and Helvetius are sophists of materialistic ethics" (Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Braunschweig, 1881, II, S. 388). "What is fatal to materialism is that it indulges, nourishes and encourages man's lowest instincts, the baseness out of which he was created" (Fritz Schultze, *Die Grundgedanken des Materialismus und die Kritik derselben*, Leipzig, 1887, S. 50).

**** *La politique naturelle ou discours sur les vrais principes du gouvernement*, par un ancien magistrat (Holbach), 1773, pp. 45-46.

Where does this so groundless accusation spring from? How could it have been believed almost universally?

In the first place, *ignorance* is to blame. The French materialists are much spoken of, but not read. It is therefore hardly surprising that, having struck deep root, the prejudice lives on.

The prejudice itself has two sources, both equally abundant.

Eighteenth-century materialist philosophy was a revolutionary philosophy. It was merely the ideological expression of the revolutionary bourgeoisie's struggle against the clergy, the nobility, and the absolute monarchy. It goes without saying that, in its struggle against an obsolete system, the bourgeoisie could have no respect for a world-outlook that was inherited from the past and hallowed that despised system. "Different times, different circumstances, a different philosophy," as Diderot so excellently put it in his article on Hobbes in the *Encyclopédie*. The philosophers of the good old days, who tried to live in peace with the Church, had no objections to a morality which claimed revealed religion as its source. The philosophers of the new times wanted morals to be free of any alliance with "*superstition*". "Nothing can be more disadvantageous to human morals than having them blended with divine morals. In linking sensible morals, based on experience and reason, with a mystical religion that is opposed to reason and based on imagination and authority, one could only muddle, weaken and even destroy the former."*

This divorcement of morals from religion could not have been to everybody's liking, and it already provided grounds to revile the materialists' ethics. But that was not all. "Religious morals" preached humility, mortification of the flesh, and quelling of the passions. To those who suffer here on Earth they promised recompense in the world to come. The new morality reinstated the flesh, reinstated the rights of the passions,** and made society responsible for the misfortunes of its members.*** Like Heine, it wanted

* *Système social ou Principes naturels de la morale et de la politique. Avec un examen de l'influence du gouvernement sur les mœurs.* Par l'auteur du *Système de la Nature*, Londres, 1773, I, p. 36. Cf. with the Preface to *Morale universelle* by the same author: "We shall not deal here with religious morals, which do not recognise the rights of reason, since they pursue the aim of leading people along supernatural roads."

** "Passions are true counterweights to passions; let us not seek to destroy them but try to give them direction; let us balance those that are detrimental with those that are useful to society. Reason, the fruit of experience, is merely the art of choosing, for our own happiness, the passions we should listen to" (*Système de la Nature*, I, p. 304).

*** "Let them not tell us that no government can make all its subjects happy; no doubt, it cannot please the whims of a few idle citizens who do not know what to think up to dispel their ennui; it can and must, however, engage in satisfying the real needs of the multitude. A society enjoys all the happiness it is capable of when the greatest number of its members are fed,

"to set up the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth".⁷ Therein lay its revolutionary side, but therein, too, was its wrongness in the eyes of those who stood for the then existent social structure.

In his *Correspondance littéraire*,⁸ Grimm wrote that, following the publication of Helvetius's *De l'Esprit*, a certain comic verse circulated throughout Paris, expressing the apprehension of "respectable folk":

*"Admirez tous cet auteur-la
Qui de 'l'Esprit' intitula
Un livre qui n'est que matière."**

Indeed, all materialist morals were merely "matter" to those who did not understand them, and also to those who, though understanding them excellently, preferred "*tippling wine in secret, while preaching water-drinking in public*".⁹

This will be sufficient to explain how and why materialist morals, to this day, make the hair of all philistines of all "civilised" nations stand on end.

Yet there were, among the opponents of materialist morals, such men as Voltaire and Rousseau. Were they philistines too?

As for Rousseau, he was no philistine in this instance, but it must be admitted that the Patriarch of Ferney¹⁰ brought a substantial portion of philistinism into the discussion.

When a man comes into the world, he brings with him only the faculty of *sensation*, what is known as the *intellectual* faculties all develop from this faculty. Some of the impressions or sensations a man gets from the objects he meets please him, while others cause him suffering. He approves of some of them, which he wants to last or become renewed in him; he regards others with disapproval, and avoids them as much as he can. In other words, a man likes some sensations and the objects that produce them, and dislikes other impressions and that which evokes them. Since man lives in society, he is surrounded by creatures like himself, who feel exactly what he does. All these creatures seek enjoyment, and fear suffering. They call *good* whatever gives them enjoyment, and *evil* whatever causes them suffering. Whatever is of constant use to them they call *virtue*, while whatever is injurious

clothed and housed—in a word, can, without excessive labour, satisfy the needs that Nature has made necessary to them.... As a consequence of human follies, entire nations are obliged to toil, sweat, and water the soil with their tears so as to provide for the luxury, whims and corruption of a small number of madmen, a handful of useless people, for whom happiness has become impossible because their unbridled imagination knows no bounds" (ibid., p. 298).

* [Admire this author, all of you, who has entitled his book *On the Spirit*, though it contains nothing but matter.]

to them in the make-up of those that surround them is called *vice*. One who does good to his fellow-men is *good*; he who causes them harm is *evil*. Hence it follows, in the first place, that man does not stand in need of divine aid to distinguish *virtue* from *vice*; in the second place, for men to be virtuous, the performance of virtue should *give* them *pleasure*, be *pleasing* to them. Man should love vice if it makes him happy. A man is evil only because it is to his advantage to be so. Evil and wicked men are so often to be met in this world of ours only because no government exists that could enable them to find advantage in justice, honesty and charity; conversely, the vested interests everywhere drive them to injustice, evil and crime. "*Thus, it is not Nature that creates evil people, but our institutions that make them such.*"*

Such is the formal aspect of materialist morals, which we have conveyed almost in Holbach's own words. His thoughts often lack clarity. Thus, it is tautological to say that *if vice makes man happy, he should love vice*; if vice does indeed make man happy, then he *already loves* vice. This absence of precision in Holbach often leads to unfortunate consequences. Thus, in one place he says that "*interest is the only motivation of human acts*". Elsewhere he gives the following definition: "We call *interest* that object with which any man, in conformity with the temperament and ideas peculiar to him, links his well-being; in other words, *interest* is simply what each of us regards as necessary to his happiness".** This is so broad a definition that one can no longer tell the difference between materialist and religious morals***; any adherent of the latter could say that his opponents had merely invented a new terminology, and preferred to call self-interested such actions that had previously been called *disinterested*. However that may be, one can readily understand what Holbach meant by saying that if vice makes man happy he should love vice. He makes society responsible for the vices of its members.****

Voltaire fulminates against Holbach for the latter's alleged *advice* to people to take to vice if that proves to their advantage. This reminds one of l'abbé de l'*Lignac*, who made a convert to the new morality reply to the question of whether he should love the interests of his nation, as follows: in the measure in which it is to my advantage. Yet Voltaire knew more of the matter than de Lignac ever did: he knew his Locke very well, and must have

* *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 306.

** *ibid.*, p. 268.

*** It is not only too broad but also tautological since it says nothing except that man wants only what he wants. This was noted by *Turgot* in his analysis of *Helvetius's* theory of morality.

**** "In depraved societies one should oneself be depraved to be happy" (*Système de la Nature*, II, p. 237).

seen that materialist morals were merely continuing the English philosopher's cause. In his *Traité de métaphysique*, Voltaire himself said far bolder things about morals than Holbach ever did. However, the patriarch felt afraid: he was apprehensive lest the people, after turning into atheists and utilitarian moralists, should become too audacious. "All things considered," he wrote to Madame Necker (September 26, 1770), "the age of Phaedra and le Misanthrope was a better one."¹¹ Of course it was! The people were held in curb far better then!

What is most comical is that Voltaire contraposes the following argument to Holbach's morals: "Our society cannot exist without the ideas of the justice and injustice, he (God) has shown us the road to reach them.... *Thus, for all people, from Peking to Ireland, the weal of society is firmly established as an immutable rule of virtue.*" What a discovery for an atheist philosopher to make!

Rousseau's conclusions were different: he thought that utilitarian morals could not explain the most virtuous of human actions. "What is meant by offering up one's life in one's own interests?" he asked, adding that he found repellent that philosophy which was a source of embarrassment to virtuous actions, escaped from any difficulty only by ascribing base intentions and evil motives to virtuous actions, and "is obliged to humiliate Socrates and slander Regulus".¹² For an appreciation of what this reproach signifies, we have to advance the following considerations.

In their struggle against "religious morality", the materialists were out, first and foremost, to prove that people were capable of knowing what "virtue" is, without any aid from Heaven. "Did men need supernatural revelation," Holbach exclaimed, "to learn that justice is necessary for the preservation of society, or that injustice merely brings together enemies prepared to do injury to one another? Was it necessary that God should speak for them to realise that creatures who have gathered together need to love each other and render each other aid? Was aid necessary for them to discover from on high that vengeance is an evil, an outrage against one's country's laws, which, if they are just, see to it that citizens are avenged? ... Is not anyone who values his life aware that vice, intemperance and sensual pleasure shorten his days? Finally, has not experience proved to any thinking being that crime is an object of hatred to his" (i.e., the criminal's.—G.P.) "fellow men; that vice is injurious to those who are infected with it; that virtue wins respect and love for those who cultivate it? If men reflect but a little on what they do, on their true interests, and on the purpose of society, they will realise their duty to one another.... *The voice of Reason is sufficient*

for us to learn what our duty is towards our fellow creatures.”*

Since Reason is sufficient to teach us our duties, the mediation of Philosophy is indicated to show us that virtue lies in our own and correctly understood interest. It must also show us that the most illustrious heroes of mankind would not have acted otherwise if they had had only their own happiness in mind. Thus psychological analysis arises, which does, indeed, often and obviously humiliate Socrates and slander Regulus. Consequently, Rousseau's reproach was not made without certain grounds; only the “citizen of Geneva” forgot that the “slandered Socrates” often fell into the same error that the materialists are reproached with.**

Whether in Greece or in France, in Germany or in Russia (Chernyshevsky and his followers)—the Enlighteners everywhere made one and the same mistake. They were out to *prove* what cannot be proved but must be taught by the life of society itself.** Mankind's moral development follows closely in the footsteps of economic necessity, precisely adapting itself to society's actual needs. In this sense, it can and should be said that interest is the foundation of morality. However, the historical process of that adaptation takes place behind people's backs, irrespective of the will and intellect of individuals. A line of behaviour that is dictated by interest seems to be an injunction of the “gods”, “inborn conscience”, “Reason”, or “Nature”. But what kind of interest is it that dictates one line of behaviour or another to individuals? Is it self-interest? In innumerable cases, it is. Howev-

* *Le Christianisme dévoilé ou examen des principes et des effets de la religion chrétienne*, à Londres, 1757, pp. 126-28. This book was called “the most horrible that could have appeared on Earth”. It was actually brought out in Nancy, not in London.

** “And yet,—what Possession (sic!) shall be placed in Competition with a Friend? What Slave so affectionate to our Persons, or studious of our Interest? What Horse able to render us such Service? From whence, or from whom, can we at all Times and on every Occasion receive so many and such essential Benefits?” (Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates*, II, Ch. IV). Nothing more “cynical” was ever said by the French materialists. Does that mean that Socrates “slandered” himself?

*** Incidentally, in the eighteenth century this was fully in keeping with the spirit of the times, and the adherents of “religious morality” in no way lagged behind the materialists in this respect, sometimes producing quite amusing “proofs”. Here is a splendid example. According to Helvetius, the Jesuits initiated the performance of a ballet in Rouen, in the year 1750, “the object of which was to show that ‘pleasure prepares the youth for the true virtues, that is to say, the first act is on the civic virtues, the second—on the military virtues, while the third is on the virtues proper to religion’. In the ballet they tried to prove that truth through the dances. Personified Religion performed a *pas de deux* with Pleasure and, to give the latter more piquancy, as the Jansenists³ said at the time, the Jesuits clad him in trousers. But if, in their opinion, pleasure can do anything with man, what is it that interest cannot do with him? Is not all interest reduced in us to a search after pleasure?” (*De l'Homme*, I, section II, chap. 16.)

er, inasmuch as individuals listen to the voice of their personal interests, it is no longer a question of "virtuous" actions that we are called upon to explain. Such actions reflect the interest of the *entity*, *social interest*, and it is the latter that prescribe them. The dialectic of historical development leads, not only to "*sense becoming nonsense, and beneficence turning into evil*"¹⁴ but also to the *selfish* interests of society or a class often turning, in the hearts of individuals, into impulses full of *unselfishness* and heroism. The secret of that conversion lies in the influence of the social environment. The French materialists were good at appraising that influence; they kept on reiterating that upbringing determines everything, that people become what they are, and are not born that way. Nevertheless, they regarded and depicted this process of *moral moulding* as a series of reflexions that are repeated at every instant in every individual's mind and are directly modified according to the circumstances affecting the private interest of anybody who is motivated to action. From this viewpoint, as we have seen, the moralist's task takes shape of itself. The thinking of individuals should be protected against errors, and the moral "truth" be pointed out to them. In that case, then, what is meant by pointing out the moral truth? It means pointing out where personal interest, as best understood, lies; it means lauding that particular disposition of heart which leads up to some praiseworthy action. It was thus that the psychological analysis which Rousseau rose up against came into being; it was thus that there appeared the interminable hymns of praise in honour of virtue that Grimm called *capucinades*¹⁵. The latter were highly characteristic of some of the eighteenth-century French materialists, while a false analysis of behaviour motivations was a feature of the others. However, the absence of the dialectical method is conspicuous in *everything they all* wrote, and wreaks vengeance on *all of them* in equal degree.

In his polemic against materialist morals, Rousseau often appealed to the *conscience*, that "divine instinct", "innate feeling", and the like. It would have been easy for the materialists to explain that feeling as being the fruit of upbringing and habit. For their part, however, they preferred to present it as a series of reflections grounded in a thorough awareness of personal interest. According to Holbach, conscience can be defined as "knowledge of the effects that one's actions produce on others, and, conversely, on ourselves". "A guilty conscience is the certitude or the fear of having merited their hatred or their contempt by our conduct towards them."* It is clear that Rousseau could not have been satisfied with such a "definition"; it is just as clear

* *Système social*, I, p. 56; cf. also *La Morale universelle*, I, pp. 4-5.

that the materialists could not tolerate his point of view. The least admission of "innate feeling" would have defeated all their philosophy. Today dialectical materialism can easily single out that part of the truth which is contained both in Rousseau's statements and in those of the French materialists.

And so all moral laws originate from "Reason". But what is Reason guided by in its search after these laws? By *Nature*, Holbach replies without the least hesitation. "Man is a feeling, intelligent and rational being." Reason does not have to know anything more than that to endow us with "*universal* morality".

The psychology of this appeal to "Nature" can easily be spelt out. Incidentally, it is explained by Holbach himself: "To impose duties on us, and to prescribe to us laws that obligate us, an authority is doubtlessly needed that has the right to command us." But the materialists were at war with all the traditional authorities, so they appealed to Nature to find a way out of the difficulty. "Can anyone deny this right to necessity? Can one question the claims of that Nature which exercises sovereign rights over all that exists?" All this was very "natural" at the time, but it must be emphasised that, like most of his contemporaries, Holbach was referring only to the nature of "*Man*", which is something quite different from the Nature we have to struggle against for our existence.

Montesquieu was convinced that differences in climate produced "variety in laws". He adduced most inconclusive proof to bear out this relationship, while the materialist philosophers demonstrated it with no great difficulty. "Will one say," Holbach asked, "that the Sun which shone down on the Greeks and the Romans, who were so jealous of their liberties, does not send the same rays upon their effete descendants?"* Basically speaking, however, Montesquieu's line of thought was not quite erroneous. Today we know the significance the geographical environment has had for the history of mankind, and if Montesquieu was mistaken, that does not at all mean that those who attacked him on this score had a better understanding of what Hegel was later to call the "geographical foundation of world history". They had *not* the least knowledge of the matter, neither right nor wrong knowledge. Human nature was the key they expected to use to open

* *Politique naturelle*, II, p. 10; *Système social*, III, pp. 6-8. For his part, Voltaire never tired of warring against this opinion of Montesquieu, who, incidentally, had said nothing new on this question, but had merely repeated the views of certain Greek and Roman writers. To be fair, we shall add that Holbach often spoke of the influence of climate far more superficially than Montesquieu did. "In its essence, a definite climate organises and modifies people in such a way that they become either very useful or harmful to their race" (!), says Holbach in *Système de la Nature*.

all doors in the edifice of morals, politics and history. It is often difficult for us today to have a clear realisation of a point of view so commonly held by eighteenth-century writers.

"The development of the arts," it was said by *Suard*, for example, "is subject to the same gradations that one observes in the development of mankind." We seize eagerly upon this idea, thinking that the author is about to reveal the hidden causes of human development, which, while independent of the human will, give direction to their spirit and enlightenment ("lumières"). There are some who think that, thanks to *Suard*, they are escaping from the *circulus vitiosus* the philosophy of history was revolving in so hopelessly in the eighteenth century. They are, however, too precipitant, and deeply mistaken. The causes that the development of the "arts" is subordinate to are dependent only on the nature of—"man".... "In childhood man has nothing but his senses, his imagination and his memory; he needs nothing but songs and tales. Then follows the age of passions, and the soul wants to be stirred and agitated; next the mind expands and reason becomes fortified; these two faculties, in their turn, have to be exercised, their activities extending to everything affecting man's curiosity, tastes, feelings and needs."*

It is now recognised by all natural scientists that the sequence of forms the individual organism passes through from the embryo to its full development is a repetition of the form-changes gone through by the ancestors of the genus the organism belongs to. *Embryogenetic* development epitomises the *genealogical*. In the same way, one can regard the sequence of forms that each man's mind goes through from infancy to full development as a kind of synopsis of the lengthy and slow changes each man's ancestors underwent in the course of history. Highly interesting research can, in our opinion, be carried out in this field.** But what would be said of the natural scientist who would see, in the embryogenetic history of an individual organism, sufficient grounds for changes in a genus? But that is exactly the mode of thinking of *Suard* and, together with him, of all eighteenth-century "philosophers", who had a vague idea of the pattern of mankind's development.

In this, *Grimm* is in full accord with *Suard*. "What people has not started by being a poet, and ended by being a philosopher?" he asks.*** *Helvetius* alone understood that this fact could

* *Du progrès des lettres et de la philosophie dans le dix-huitième siècle. In Mélanges de littérature*, Paris, l'an XII, t. III, p. 383.

** It goes without saying that the closest attention should be paid to the tremendous influence that adaptation to the social environment exerts on the individual's spiritual and moral development.

*** *Correspondance littéraire*, août 1774.

spring from other and deeper causes than Suard thought. But we have not yet come to Helvetius.

Man is a sentient, thinking and rational creature. He is created thus, has always been and will always remain that way, despite all his errors. In this sense, man's nature is immutable. What, then, is there surprising in the moral and political laws dictated by that nature being, in their turn, of universal significance, unchanging, and constant? These laws have not yet been proclaimed, and it must be admitted that "nothing is more common than to see civil laws in contradiction with those of Nature". These corrupt civil laws are due to the "perversity of morals, the errors of societies, or tyranny which forces nature to bow to its authority".* Let Nature have its say, you will learn the truth once and for all. Errors are without number, but there is only one truth. "Morals do not exist for the monster or the madman; universal morals can be established only for rational and normally organised creatures; in them Nature does not change; observation alone is needed to infer the immutable rules that they must follow."**

But how is one to explain that the same Holbach could have written the following lines: "Like all natural bodies, societies undergo transformations, changes, and revolutions; they are formed, grow and disintegrate just like all beings. One and the same laws cannot suit them in different circumstances of development: useful in one period, they become useless and harmful in another."

It is all very simple. Holbach draws a single conclusion from the above argumentation, namely that obsolete and outmoded laws (the reference is to the laws of France at the time) should be abolished. The entrenchedness of a law speaks rather *against* it than *for* it. The example of our forebears is no evidence in its favour. Holbach could have proved this in theory, but only by appealing to "reason", but, in view of his readers' prejudices, he pretended to adhere to the historical point of view. The same is true of the history of religions. The "philosophers" have devoted a great deal of attention to this subject, their purpose being to prove that the Christian religion, which claims to be based

* *Politique naturelle*, I, p. 52.

** Condorcet, who rebelled against Voltaire's views on this particular matter, which were diametrically opposite to his own, asserted (*Le Philosophe ignorant*¹⁶; the Patriarch often changed his views) that the ideas of justice and right developed "without fail in one and the same way with all beings endowed with the ability to feel" and acquire ideas. "Therefore they will be the same." Of course, it is true that people "often change them". But any creature that reasons correctly will arrive at the same ideas in morals as in geometry. Such ideas are the necessary conclusion from the indisputable truth that "people are feeling and thinking creatures". (In a Note to *Philosophe ignorant* of the *Kehl* edition of Voltaire's works.)

on revelation, fully resembles all profane religions. This was a blow aimed against the odious Christian faith; when it had been dealt, none of the "philosophers" felt concerned with a study of the comparative history of religions. The times were revolutionary, and all "truths" proclaimed by the philosophers (which very often contradicted one other) had immediately practical aims in view.

We shall remark at this point that "human nature" often led the materialist philosophers much farther than they had expected. "The distinction that was often drawn between *physical* and *moral* man was excessively abused." Man is a purely physical being. Moral man is the selfsame physical creature, only considered from a definite angle, i.e., in respect of some of his faculties as conditioned by his organisation. Hence, "*All of men's errors are physical errors*".* Thus, what devolves on medicine, or rather on physiology, is the task of providing us with a key to the human heart. The same science should also explain to us the historical changes that have taken place in mankind. "In Nature, in which everything is interlinked, everything acts and interacts, everything moves and changes, composes and decomposes, forms and is destroyed, there is not a single atom that does not play an important and necessary role; there is not a single imperceptible molecule which, if placed in suitable circumstances, does not lead to tremendous effects.... An excess of acridity in a fanatic's bile, excessively inflamed blood in a conqueror's heart, troublesome digestion in a monarch's stomach, a whim that passes through some woman's mind" (also a molecule?—*G.P.*) "are sufficient causes to start wars, send millions of men into the slaughter, destroy fortresses, reduce cities to rubble... and spread desolation and calamity for a long succession of centuries...."***

There is a well-known aphorism about the speck of sand that found its way into Cromwell's bladder, thus leading to the entire picture of the world being reshaped. There is neither more nor less content in this aphorism than in Holbach's ideas about "atoms" and "molecules" as the causes of historical events, the only difference being that we owe the aphorism to a pious man. In the latter's opinion, it was God who introduced the fatal speck of sand into the Protector's body. Holbach already would have nothing of God, but in everything else he could produce no objection to this aphorism.

Aphorisms of this kind contain a "grain" of the truth, but that truth also relates to the entire truth in just the same way as a "grain" or a molecule does towards all matter in the Universe.

* *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 5.

** *ibid.*, I, p. 214.

Since it is infinitesimal, that truth does not take us a single step forward in our study of social phenomena. And if we did nothing else in historical science but await the advent of the genius that Laplace dreamt of—a genius who, with the aid of molecular mechanics, will reveal to us all the secrets of mankind's past, present and future—we could indulge in long and calm slumber, for that marvellous genius's coming will not take place so soon.

"If, aided by experience, we knew the elements underlying the temperament of a man or of most of the individuals a people is made up of, we would know what is to their liking, what laws they need, and what institutions are useful to them."* In that case, however, what would become of "*universal morals*" and "*policies that are in accord with Nature*"? Holbach has nothing to say on that score but comments with ever greater zeal on all the moral, political and social laws which, of necessity, derive from man's nature as considered in the capacity of a sentient, etc., creature.

It was highly "*natural*" that, in Holbach's times, Mother Nature was politically and morally on the side of the very laws that the French bourgeoisie needed at the moment when it was prepared to become "*everything*".¹⁷

A tacit agreement, a social pact, exists between society and its members. That contract is renewed at every moment, and is designed to ensure the mutual guarantees of citizens' rights, of which *liberty, property and security* are the most sacred. Moreover: "Liberty, property and security are the only bonds that attach people to the land they live in. No homeland exists if these advantages have disappeared."** Property is the soul of this holy trinity. Security and liberty are necessary in society. "But it is impossible for man to keep or make his existence happy if he cannot enjoy the advantages his exertions and his personality (!) have provided him with. Therefore the laws of Nature have granted every man a right which is called *property*". Society cannot deprive a man of his property "*because it is created to*

* *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 106.

M. Jules Soury naively remarks about these words: "This idea of Baron d'Holbach's has in part become a fact." (!) "Nevertheless, it is moral statistics rather than physiology that seems bound to render the greatest services to the physics of morals" (*Bréviaire de l'histoire du matérialisme*, Paris, 1881, p. 653).

** *Politique naturelle*, I, pp. 13-14, 38, 125.

"The great and chief end, therefore, of men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the *preservation of their property*, to which in the state of Nature there are many things wanting..." (John Locke, *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, [London, 1884, Book II], Ch. IX, "Of the Ends of Political Society and Government", p. 256).

assure that property". Thus, property is the aim, and liberty and security are the means. Let us examine this sacred right in this light and in greater detail.

Where does it spring from? It is based on the necessary relation that arises between man and the product of his labour. Thus, a field becomes, in a certain way, a part of him who cultivates it, because it is his will, his arms, his strength, his industry, in a word, "*his inherent individual qualities, those belonging to his person*", that have made that field what it is. "That field, irrigated with his sweat, becomes, so to speak, identified with him; its yield belongs to him in just the same way as his limbs and his faculties do, for, without his labour, that produce would never have existed or, at least, would not have existed in the way it does."*

Thus Holbach saw bourgeois property in the form of the product of the proprietor's own labour. This, however, did not preclude his high regard for merchants and manufacturers, those "benefactors, who, in enriching themselves, give occupations and life to all society".** He seems to have had a correct, though not quite clear, understanding of the origins of the manufacturers' wealth. "...While the labourer," he says, "*gains his livelihood by his labour, he is constantly increasing the wealth of those who give him employment.*" Now, is that wealth produced only by "*inherent individual qualities, those belonging to his person*" ("*What a multitude of artisans of all kinds turn the wheels of manufactures!*")?*** Of course, not! But what of that? Manufacturers and merchants are very useful people, so should not a grateful society award wealth and honours to those that serve it so well? The trouble lies, not in the indisputable fact that the "artisan" promotes the manufacturer's wealth but in "Gothic and barbarous prejudices" leading to the manufacturer and merchant being held in lower esteem than they deserve. "The peaceable tradesman seems a contemptible object to the stupid soldier, who does not see that this man, whom he looks down on, *clothes him, feeds him, and keeps his army supplied.*" (Sic!)****

Holbach has a different kind of language for feudal property. He regards such proprietors—"the Rich and the Grand"—as "useless and harmful members of Society" and attacks them indefatigably, for it is they who threaten "*the fruits of the labours of others*", destroy the liberty of their fellow citizens, and insult their persons. "*That is how property is incessantly violated.*"*****

* *Politique naturelle*, I, p. 39.

** *Morale universelle*, II, p. 249.

*** *ibid.*

**** *ibid.*, II, p. 240.

***** *Politique naturelle*, I, p. 42.

We know that society has been created to preserve property, but the tacit social pact does and should refer to bourgeois property alone. In respect of feudal property, society has but a single duty—its complete and absolute abolition. Holbach stands for abolition of the nobility's privileges, obligations to them, taxes, the corvée, feudal rights, and the like.* "If the Nobles, whose harmful rights the Sovereign would take away, should make reference to the sacred rights of property, the reply might be given that property is nothing but the right to possession with justice; whatever runs counter to the national weal can never be marked by justice; whatever is injurious to the property of the husbandman can never be regarded as a right, for it is nothing but usurpation, a violation of his rights, whose maintenance is of far greater benefit to the nation than the pretensions of a small number of Seigneurs, who, not content with doing nothing, are opposed to works that are of the utmost importance both to themselves and to Society."**

The nobles "*prefer to do nothing*"; they perform no useful function in society, this condemning them in the eyes of our philosopher. There was a time when the nobles had to go to the wars at their own expense, and then enjoyed certain privileges on a fair basis of law. But on what legal foundation should they enjoy the same privileges in a society in which the army is maintained by the sovereign, and the nobles are no longer under any obligation to serve?***

A time has now arrived when the proletariat is using the same yardstick for the capitalists' rights as was used over a hundred years ago by representatives of the bourgeoisie in respect of the privileges of the nobility.

It should not be thought that the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the nobility was reflected in Holbach's mind as one between landowners and urban proprietors of various kinds. Nothing of the kind! Holbach was in no way biased in favour of movable property. On the contrary, it was landed property that he considered as the real thing, property *par excellence*. "*Ownership of land forms the genuine citizen*," he said. The condition of agriculture is the indicator of a country's economic situation in general. The "poor" are, first and foremost, "husbandmen"; defending them is tantamount to defending the country folk who are oppressed by the "Grand of this world", i.e., the nobility. Holbach went so far as to say, together with the Physiocrats,¹⁸

* Of course, he makes no exceptions either for guild and other such "privileges", or for the "wealth of the clergy".

** *L'Ethocratie ou le Gouvernement fondé sur la morale*, Amsterdam, 1776, pp. 50-51.

*** *ibid.*, p. 52.

that, directly or indirectly, all taxes fall on the land, just like everything else, whether good or bad, that happens to the nation. "It is to defend the possession of land that warfare is designed; it is to keep the fruits of the land in circulation that trade is necessary; it is by assuring lands to their owners that jurisprudence is useful."* The land is the source of a nation's entire wealth, and it is for that reason that it should be released as soon as possible from the feudal yoke, which is pressing down so heavily on it. Another argument in favour of the bourgeoisie's revolutionary trends!

"Equality" could contain nothing tempting to a man like Holbach. On the contrary, he thought it an extremely obnoxious chimera. Not all people have the same kind of organisation. They have always been unequal in their physical, moral and intellectual forces. "A man who is feeble in body or mind has always been forced to recognise the superiority of those who are stronger, more industrious, and more intelligent. One who is more industrious cultivates a larger lot and makes it more fertile than can be done by another who has received a weaker body from Nature. Thus, inequality in property and in possessions has existed from the outset."**

To such arguments the l'abbé Mably could well object that they patently contradicted the point of departure of recent political philosophy, to wit, absolutely equal rights for all people, both strong and weak.*** The time was not yet ripe for "equality", and Mably himself had to admit that "no human force could today attempt to re-establish equality without causing greater disorder than one would wish to avoid."**** The objective logic of social evolution proved to be on the side of the bourgeois theorists.

Holbach was a thorough-going and even pedantic theorist of the bourgeoisie. He fulminated against "the Pope and the Bishops, who have prescribed holidays and forced the people to become idle." He was out to show that success in trade and industry was incompatible with the morals of a religion "whose founder anathematised the rich and denied them entry into the Kingdom of Heaven". For his part, Holbach inveighed against

* *Politique naturelle*, I, p. 179.

** *ibid.*, p. 20.

*** "If my physical or moral qualities give me no right over a man less endowed than I am with the gifts of Nature; if I cannot demand of him that he should not demand of me—then tell me, I ask you, on what grounds I can claim that our conditions are unequal.... It should be demonstrated to me by virtue of what title I can establish my superiority" (*Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes sur l'ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques*, à la Haye, 1768, p. 24).

**** *Politique naturelle*, I, p. 15.

"this innumerable multitude of priests, coenobites, friars and nuns, who have no other functions than raising their idle hands to heaven, and praying night and day to gain favours for society". He rebelled against the Catholic fasts because "Powers that the Roman Catholics regard as heretical are almost the only ones to profit from the abstinence from meat; the English sell them cod, and the Dutch herrings."* All this was only "*natural*". But, when Holbach, like Voltaire and many others, missed no opportunity of referring to the story of the two thousand swine that were drowned by devils with the consent of Jesus Christ; when he reproached the mythical founder of Christianity for his lack of respect for private property; when he spoke in the same tones against the apostles, who often picked ears of corn in fields that did not belong to them; when he became briefly reconciled to Christ for the sole reason that the "Son of Man" did not keep the Sabbath holy**—he was being pedantic and most ridiculous, revealing a total absence of any understanding of history.

Holbach saw the bourgeoisie, whose spokesman and defender he was, as the most honest, diligent, noble and educated part of the nation. He would have been horrified by the bourgeoisie of today. "Avarice" (he is referring to "*cupidity*") "is an ignoble, selfish and anti-social passion, and is therefore incompatible with genuine patriotism, love of the general weal, and even with true liberty. Everything is venal in a people infected with this filthy epidemic; the only thing wanted is to strike the right bargain."*** This is highly reminiscent of Sallust but we could, at the same time, say that the scandals now following one another in rapid succession in France, Germany and Italy,¹⁹ and generally wherever the bourgeoisie has matured for its termination, were foreseen by our philosopher. "There is nothing crueller in the world than a trader excited by rapacity, as soon as he becomes the strongest, and when he is sure that his useful crimes will be applauded by his country".**** Indeed, there is not! We know that far better than our worthy "philosophers" ever did!

In most cases, Holbach regarded "wealth" from the viewpoint of the declamatory reciter, who says, "*Riches corrupt morals*". He, who had attacked "religious morals" on behalf of wealth, then rose up against rapacity on behalf of "*virtue*". "Only extreme vigilance", he says, "can prevent or at least stave off the evils

* Cf. *Le Christianisme dévoilé ou Examen des principes et des effets de la Religion Chrétienne*, 1757, pp. 176, 179, 196, 198, 199, 203.

** "Perhaps He felt, just as we do, how useful the abolition of a large number of holidays would be to the people" (*Histoire critique de Jésus Christ ou Analyse raisonnée des Évangiles*, [without a date and place of publication], p. 157).

*** *L'Ethocratie*, p. 124.

**** *Politique naturelle*, II, p. 148.

that this passion entails."* While standing for the absolute freedom of circulation ("In a word, commerce demands the fullest liberty; the freer commerce is, the wider its spread. Government should do nothing for the merchant but *abstain from interference in his action*."**), he tried to prove that politics should do everything possible to prevent any multiplication of its subjects' needs ("these will end up in becoming insatiable unless prudence places limits to them"***). He called for State interference, and became a protectionist, almost a reactionary. "...We shall call *useful that commerce* which supplies the nations with the things necessary for their subsistence, their prime needs, and even for their comfort and their content; we shall call *useless and dangerous that commerce* which provides citizens only with things they stand in no real need of, and that are fit only to satisfy the imaginary needs of their vanity." Holbach would have gone to any length to subdue that "vanity", which, in his words, spreads even to the countryside, this by the agency of *lackeys*, and of *luxury*, which corrupts "morals" (mœurs) and leads to the ruin of the most flourishing nations****. The home market is the most natural one for a country's industrial products, and industry should be assured that market. Holbach could not understand the "senseless fever to discover new fields of trade", as a result of which "the globe is no longer vast enough for the frenzied merchant", and nations are ready to cut each other's throats for some strips of sand where their greed makes them see treasures.***** He could not find terms strong enough to admonish the "people of Albion", who, he thought, "have set themselves the extravagant aim of encroaching upon the world's trade and becoming owners of the seas".*) He was afraid of excessive inequality in the distribution of wealth, which he considered a source of many evils in society. He came out in defence of small farms; he thought that British farms were too large, this often leading to the tenant farmers becoming "*monopolists*".**) The interests of the State are always linked with those of the greatest number; they demand that many citizens should be active, usefully occupied, and enjoying circumstances that permit them to supply the needs of the country without detriment to themselves. There is no Fatherland for a man who possesses nothing..."****)

* *Politique naturelle* p. 145.

** *ibid.*, p. 150.

*** *ibid.*, p. 151.

**** *L'Ethocratie*, chap. VIII, *Système social*, III, p. 73.

***** *Politique naturelle*, II, p. 154.

*) *ibid.*, p. 155.

***) *L'Ethocratie*, p. 122, Note.

****) *ibid.*, p. 117.

It will easily be seen that our philosopher could not have found to his liking the social condition of Britain, where the bourgeoisie had already carried out its "Glorious Revolution". He spoke of that country with the greatest distaste. "It is not enough to be rich to be happy," he said. "The ability is also needed to make use of riches in a way conducive to felicity. It is not enough to be free so as to be happy; freedom should not be abused ... it should not be made unjust use of." In this sense the British left much to be desired. "A people without morals", "a people unjust towards others"; "a people inflamed by a thirst for gold", "a conqueror people", "a people hostile to the freedom of others", "a venal, vicious and corrupt nation"—that was how Holbach saw the British. It was against them that he addressed one of his *capucina*des on virtue: "Then, O Britons! Cultivate wisdom and reason; engage in perfecting your government and your laws.... Eschew luxury, which is fatal to morals and to liberty. Dread the effects of religious and political fanaticism," etc., etc.*

Incidentally, the British social scene often impelled him towards a mode of thinking greatly more far-going than what we have just quoted. He insisted, for instance, that the heavy taxation for the benefit of the poor had not, and could not have reduced the number of the British poor. "It is only too true," he exclaimed, "that nations where the greatest riches are to be found contain a greater number of unfortunate people than happy ones. It is only too true that commerce enriches only a few citizens, while leaving the rest in poverty!"**

All these thoughts might well seem muddled and contradictory, but—we shall again note this—it should not be forgotten that we are dealing with a theorist of the bourgeoisie, which was then a revolutionary class and therefore capable of harbouring noble feelings. It—or rather its finest representatives, people with hearts and minds, "thinkers", as Holbach put it—dreamt of the rule of Reason, universal happiness, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Could they not but feel aversion for the inescapable consequences of their own social leanings? Could not that aversion only make them fall into a contradiction with themselves? Show a beautiful young girl an ugly, untidy and disease-bent old hag. She will be horrified, yet she will be in a hurry to live, i.e., grow old, i.e., horrify others, in their turn. An old but ever new occurrence!

Anybody who wishes to gain a concrete idea of the psychology of the eighteenth-century French philosophers might do well to address himself to Russian writers of a period from the end

* Cf. *Système social*, t. II, chap. VI.

** *L'Ethocratie*, pp. 146-47.

of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas I down to our own days. He will see the same absence of any understanding of history, the same capucinades, and the same contradictions! True, there have also been socialists among the Russian writers of this period, such as Chernyshevsky, but there have also been many who have come out against the "*bourgeoisie*" only by some misunderstanding, since they have been incapable of appraising the significance of their own demands. Our "legal" writers very often want exactly what Holbach and his friends did, but they are naive enough to consider it socialism. The great Frenchmen were prepared to swear that this was philosophy. For our part, we are convinced that the rose has the same scent whatever name it goes by.

While Holbach often held the economic views advanced by the Physiocrats, whom he was constantly lauding,* he did not share their predilection for "lawful despotism". He was a zealous supporter of representative government. To him despotism was in no way a form of rule: "Despotism can be regarded only as an unequal struggle between one or several armed brigands, and a defenceless society."** Our philosopher asked himself several "*natural questions*", which would have found understanding in the French Constituent Assembly. These highly characteristic questions were as follows:

"Should the whole yield to its part? Should the will of one man sway the will of all? Is there, in any society, a privileged being that can dispense with the duty of being useful? Is the Sovereign the only person free of the ties that bind all the others together? Can one man bind together all the rest, without himself being bound by them? Is the possession of a Sovereign Power, which is unjust in origin, maintained by force and tolerated only because of weakness, a title that can never be destroyed by justice, reason and force?" This is reminiscent of the well-known expression: "We shall ourselves become conquerors."²⁰ The following passage reminds one of another scene of the Great Revolution: "The Supreme Power is nothing more than a war of one against all as soon as the Monarch transgresses the bounds prescribed to him by the will of the people." What could be said in objection to this *in a hall for ball games*?²¹ Almost all of Holbach's writings were imbued with an inflexible hatred for despotism. It is palpable that what underlay everything he said on this matter was sad reality, not some kind of abstract theory. In just the same way, it is not abstract theory but rather the sad reality that

* "Zealous and virtuous writers", "honest citizens"; "nothing can be added to the useful views dictated to them by their concern for the public weal" (*L'Ethocratie*, pp. 144-45).

** *Politique naturelle*, p. 44.

made him appeal to liberty—that “daughter of justice and law”, “the object of love for all noble hearts”. He often seemed to sense the approach of the political storm. “The citizen,” he wrote, “cannot, without shirking his duty, refuse to side with his country against the tyrant who oppresses it.” Who can tell? Perhaps, before being committed to paper, these words were uttered and taken up at some philosophy discussion at Holbach’s home where, according to Morellet, things were said for which the house would have been struck by lightning at least a hundred times if such flashes could have followed from such causes. Diderot was probably in agreement with Holbach, and went even further. Grimm perhaps applauded in approval.... Poor man! He was to change his views when the storm burst, not in a richly appointed *salon* but on a vast historical arena.

Indeed, would Holbach’s behaviour have been any better after August 10?²² Would he have repeated at a Jacobin assembly “*is not a tyrant the most odious creature that crime could beget?*”?* Frankly speaking, we have no information on this score, but it is more than probable that he would have had no truck with the “rabid” Republicans and would have regarded them also as tyrants and foes to the Fatherland, fanatics and political frauds.

Holbach had a respect for liberty, but he was afraid of “*disturbances*”, and was convinced that, “in politics just as in medicine, drastic remedies were always dangerous”. He would have willingly had dealings with a monarch, if only the latter were in the least “*virtuous*”. Though he said that such sovereigns were very rare meteors, he was constantly dreaming of a “*sage on the throne*”. There was a moment, during the ministry of Turgot, when he thought that his dream had come true. He dedicated his book *L’Ethocratie* to Louis XVI, “just, humane, and beneficent Monarch; friend of truth, virtue, and simplicity; enemy of flattery, vice, pomp, and tyranny; restorer of order and morals; father of his people”, and so on and so forth. He may have consequently changed his opinion of Louis XVI, but his fear of the “*disorderly*” popular movement remained with him. To Holbach, the people consisted of the “*poor*”, but “*poverty, which so often becomes the plaything of the passions and caprices of power, blights the heart of man or rouses it to fury*”. As long as the “*poor man*” puts up with his condition, “the activity of his soul is completely broken; he despises himself, for he sees himself as the object of general contempt and an outcast”.** But it is worse if he rebels. “A cursory

* *ibid.*, 1, p. 144. We shall be constantly quoting from this book in setting forth Holbach’s political views. Other sources will be referred to whenever necessary.

** *L’Ethocratie*, pp. 119-20. “A people, obliged to work for its subsistence, is usually incapable of reflection” (*Système de la Nature*, 11, p. 248).

glance at the history of ancient as well as modern democracies will show that frenzy and turbulence usually give counsel to the People."* "Wherever the People are in possession of power, the State carries within itself the principle of its own destruction."** If Holbach had had to choose between an absolute monarchy and democracy, he would have given the preference to absolutism. Montesquieu was badly mistaken in calling virtue the motive force in the republican form of the State. The republic has another idol: *equality*, "*that equality which is to be met only in novels and is, in essence, nothing but envy*". The tyranny of democracy is "*the cruellest and the least reasonable*" of all tyrannies. In the class struggle in ancient Athens, Holbach saw only "*mob violence*". The first English revolution aroused in him only horror of the "religious fanaticism" of the people. "The people, without any doubt, has not been made to command; it would be incapable of that; too far-going liberty would soon degenerate in it into license..." It has been created to be "active"; "idleness would pervert it and make it insolent."*** The people should be kept in check and protected from its own foolishness.

A constitutional monarchy that gives complete freedom of action to an educated and "virtuous" bourgeoisie—that was our philosopher's political ideal. A citizen-king (Holbach often makes use of the expression), who has been elected by his fellow-citizens to be the organ and executive of the will of "all", and a class of proprietors as the interpreter of that "will"—that was what Madame "Nature" calls for through the agency of Holbach. Lange is greatly in error in ascribing a "radical" doctrine**** to him in politics. Radicalism was something psychologically impossible in eighteenth-century philosophers. We already know what idea they had of the people (and they could have had no other idea, since the French people, like matter with the metaphysicists, was then still a dead and inert mass); consequently, there remained only a philosophising and liberal bourgeoisie. In the first place, however, a consistent and thorough-going radicalism is a doctrine unsuited to the bourgeoisie as a class, even at the most revolutionary moments of its historical life (the French revolution proved that very well). Could an aggregate of "all thinking people" have been very numerous? Could they have been regarded as a political force capable of shaking society from top to bottom? The philosophers were well aware that this

* *Politique naturelle*, II, p. 238.

** *ibid.*, p. 240.

*** *ibid.*, I, p. 185; *Système social*, III, p. 85.

**** *l.c.*, p. 380. Incidentally, Lange was referring only to *Système de la Nature*. He evidently had no knowledge of *Politique naturelle*, *L'Ethocratie*, *Système social*, or *Morale universelle*.

was not the case, which was why they were constantly returning to their dream of a "sage on the throne", who would set about realising their aspirations. Here is an instructive and characteristic fact! When Turgot became minister, the "radical" Holbach, that bitter enemy of despots and tyrants, wrote that *absolutism* was very useful if it began doing away with abuses, abolishing injustice, correcting vices, and the like. In his view, "Despotism would be the best of governments if one could be assured that it always be exercised by Tituses, Trajans, or Antoninuses", but he could not forget that "it is usually wielded by those that are incapable of using it with wisdom"; at the same time, he thought that the French throne was going to a Titus, and he wanted nothing better.*

A social platform is needed if society is to be reformed. Where that does not exist, the "radicalism" of the dissatisfied with the existing authority is far from persistent. We saw that in Russia at the accession of Alexander II to the throne. When he took up the problem of abolishing the serf-owning system, our "radicals", such as Herzen and Bakunin, declared themselves "conquered" by the emperor's wisdom and toasted the Russian Titus. Even Chernyshevsky was prepared to admit that despotism was the best form of rule when it "does away with abuses, abolishes injustice, and the like."

Belinsky, the most brilliant and boldest spokesman for the "Westernisers"²³ in Russian literature during the reign of Nicholas I, once said, eighteen months before his death, i.e., when he was more of a radical than ever before, that all and any progress came from above in Russia. Nicholas I could resemble anyone in the world but "Titus" or "Trajan". But what else was there for Belinsky to think? What else was there to pin his hopes on? From the Westerniser's point of view, the Russian people were an inert and dead mass, worth nothing without guidance by a demiurge. When, several decades later, a revolutionary movement began among the student youth, our "intelligentsia", they escaped from the quandary by breaking with the "West", asserting that the Russians were more mature for revolution and "socialism" than any other people. Thus, the admirers of Belinsky and Chernyshevsky had now become, in essence, *contumacious Slavophiles*.²⁴

"Many Sovereigns often rule so harshly only because they do not know the truth; they dislike the truth because they do not know its invaluable advantages", said Holbach. A wise ruler "will never guard his own boundless authority; he will sacrifice part of it so as to have better use of that which will remain with

* *L'Ethocratie*, p. 6.

him". The same idea was repeated several years ago by Madame Tsebrikova in her celebrated letter to Alexander III. That lady laid no claim to radicalism.*

When, early in 1890, the German emperor issued his edicts on the labour question,²⁵ the Russian liberal and "radical" press was convinced that Germany was ruled by a wise monarch.

A "sage on the throne" was the *deus ex machina*²⁶ of eighteenth-century French philosophy, for he could at once solve all the theoretical difficulties and all the contradictions springing from the metaphysical standpoint from which the "philosophers" viewed all social phenomena. How did the French Enlightener see the course of history? He saw it as an endless succession of events, most of them sad, without any inner nexus, and subordinate to no pattern. "You will sometimes see happy times," Condillac instructed his pupil, "when knowledge, laws and morals have made States prosperous; but you will more often see unhappy times, when ignorance, prejudices, errors and vice have prepared calamities for peoples, and have ruined the most flourishing empires."** Why has that been so? Because "enlightenment" has been lacking. "Born in the bosom of barbarism, the arts and sciences have successively enlightened a small number of privileged nations. This is a luminary which conceals itself from some in the measure that it reveals itself to others, and it always lights up only a limited area."*** Voltaire expressed the same ideas more tersely and forcibly in his *Essai sur les mœurs*. "Reason," he wrote, "is only beginning to arise." Thus, the past could witness only unreason and folly, and unreason and folly obey no laws, and are, in general, unworthy of study; it is sufficient to establish their existence. "Their antiquities," Voltaire wrote of the barbarians of Asia, "merit an historical description no more than *the wolves and the tigers* of their countries do."**** Yet Voltaire was one of the finest students of history, which he gave much time to. He vigorously called in question the opinion held by his "*divine Emilie*", who was never able to go through any serious book on the history of modern peoples.***** Very few people knew history as Voltaire did.

"Man", said Holbach, "begins by eating acorns and contesting with the beasts for his food; he ends by measuring the heavens. Having tilled the soil and sown it, he invents geometry. To protect

* Mme. Tsebrikova asked the emperor what history would have to say of him if he continued to rule in the same way as before. "What business is that of yours?" was what the tsar wrote in the margin of this woman's letter.

** *Cours d'études pour l'instruction du prince de Parme*, Genève, 1779, IV, pp. 1-2.

*** *ibid.*, p. 2.

**** *Essai sur les mœurs*, ch. 53.

***** See the Preface to *Essai sur les mœurs*.

himself from the cold, he first covers himself with the skins of animals he has overcome, but at the end of several centuries you see him adding gold to silk. A cave or a tree-trunk was his first dwelling, but he ends up by becoming an architect and building palaces.”* In our times, we can, without making mention here of *Marx* and *Engels*, refer to *Morgan*, who has taken as his point of departure the development of mankind’s productive forces, this enabling him to successfully penetrate into the secret of its historical advance. Holbach never even realised that he had set forth the fundamental facts of human history. He had done so only to show the victories scored by “Reason” and to prove, against Rousseau, that civilised life was preferable to the savage state. “When it fell into error, mankind became unfortunate”—this is Holbach’s philosophy of history in a nutshell.** If he had had to go into detail, he would have added that the civilisation of antiquity had fallen owing to “luxury”, that feudalism had sprung from “rapine, disturbances and wars”, that “Charles I had to be beheaded because of the religious dissensions and his lack of tolerance”, and that Jesus was an imposter, etc.; he would have been greatly surprised to learn that he saw only the “outside of phenomena”.

The “philosophers” saw in history nothing but the conscious activities of people (more or less “wise”, but very often much the opposite, as we have already seen); however, to discern in history nothing but the conscious activities of people means greatly limiting one’s horizon and being surprisingly superficial. In each great historical movement we see, standing at the head of their contemporaries, men who give expression to their trends and formulate their aspirations. In just the same way, there may appear others who ride the crest of political reaction, struggle against innovative trends, and disapprove of the innovators’ strivings. If history is made up of nothing but humanity’s conscious activities, then it is only “great men” that are, of necessity, the cause of the historical movement. It will then follow that religion, morals and manners, customs and the entire nature of a people are the creation of one or several great men, who have acted with definite aims in view. Let us see what Holbach has to say of the Jewish people.

Moses led the Israelites into the wilderness, he “accustomed them to the blindest obedience; he taught them the will of Heaven, the marvellous fable about their forefathers, and bizarre ceremonies with which the Almighty linked His favours; above all, he inspired in them a most venomous hatred for the gods of other

* *Système social*, I, p. 191.

** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 32. See also the Introduction to *Système social*.

nations, and the most elaborate cruelty against their worshippers. By dint of carnage and harshness, he turned them into compliant slaves to his will, ready to back his passions and to sacrifice themselves to satisfy his ambitious designs. In a word, he turned the Hebrews into monsters of frenzy and ferocity. After having thus instilled in them this spirit of destruction, he showed them their neighbours' lands and possessions, which God Himself had allotted to them."*

From this point of view, the history of the Jewish people is nothing out of the ordinary. All peoples have had their Moses, although such Moseses have never been as cruel as the Jewish one, since, according to Holbach as well as Voltaire, history never knew so evil a people as the people of Israel. "It was usually from the midst of civilised nations that there emerged personages who brought social habits, agriculture, the arts, laws, gods, creeds and religious opinions to families or hordes that were still scattered and not yet united in national bodies. They tempered their morals, gathered them together, and taught them to turn their forces to account and help one another to satisfy their wants with greater ease. Having thus made their existence more happy, they won their love and veneration, acquired the right to prescribe opinions" (1) "and made them adopt those which they had themselves invented or borrowed from the civilised countries they had come from. History shows us that the most famous law-givers were men who, enriched with useful knowledge to be found in the midst of refined nations, brought to ignorant and helpless savages arts that the latter had not yet known. Such were the Bacchuses, the Orpheuses, the Triptolemites," etc.**

Did all the civilised peoples of today pass through the state of savagery in the beginning of their development? This question which can so easily be answered today, disturbed our philosopher not a little. He had no firmly established opinion on the origin of the human race; how, then, could he have given a description of its primitive social condition? It is highly probable that all civilised peoples began from savagery. But how is that condition of savagery itself to be described? At this point there appears a new *deus ex machina*—the frightful upheavals that took place on our globe. It may be that such upheavals more than once destroyed the greater part of mankind. Those that did not perish were unable to pass on to following generations the knowledge and the arts that had existed prior to such catastrophes. It is thus possible that people were again thrown into backwardness on many an occasion after they had reached a certain level of

* *Le Christianisme dévoilé*, p. 35.

** *Système de la Nature*, II, pp. 24-25.

civilisation. "It was perhaps these periodical renewals of mankind that brought about the profound ignorance in which we see it plunged in matters of the greatest moment to it. That may be the true source of the imperfections of our knowledge and of the shortcomings in political and religious institutions."* We have already seen that it was not given to men to know what came first—the egg or the animal. We know now that it was not given to Holbach to know whether civilisation preceded the savage state, or vice versa.

Holbach was satisfied with the knowledge that "mankind has become unfortunate in consequence of *error*", *from which it had to be delivered*. He grudged neither time nor money to accomplish this noble task, dedicating all his life to a struggle against "*prejudices*", of which religion was the most tenacious and pernicious. Our philosopher waged an incessant struggle against it. In his struggle against "l'infâme", Voltaire spared the "Supreme Being", and merely tried to call Him to reason. In matters of religion, he was a constitutionalist. What he wanted was to weaken God's omnipotence through the eternal laws of Nature as interpreted by the "philosophers". However, in heavenly matters, the French materialists were out-and-out republicans: they guillotined God long before the good Dr. Guillotin. They hated Him as though He were their personal enemy: this wilful, vengeful and cruel despot aroused their noble ire as men and citizens. "It is impossible to love a Being, the idea of whom can arouse nothing but fear," Holbach exclaimed. "...How can one look without fear, in the face of a God whom one considers barbarous enough to damn us? No man on Earth can have the least spark of love for a God who holds in readiness punishment infinite in duration and severity for ninety-nine-hundredths of his children.... Then, draw your conclusions, O theologians, that, according to your own principles, your God is infinitely more malicious than the most malicious of men."**

Holbach's English materialist contemporaries were far better disposed towards the God of the ancient Jews, for whom they harboured only a "*feeling of love*" and "*deference*". The social conditions they lived in were quite different. Two bodies that are made up of one and the same elements, only in different proportions, do not possess one and the same chemical properties. Moreover: yellow phosphorus differs considerably from the red variety. That does not surprise any of the chemists, who say that it depends on the molecular structure of one and the same elements. However, surprise is constantly expressed at one and the same ideas not

* *ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

** *Le bon sens puisé dans la nature*, I, pp. 89-93.

having the same colouring and leading up to dissimilar practical conclusions in different countries which are, on the whole, fairly similar in social structure. The movement of ideas is only a reflection of social movement: the various roads that ideas follow and their constantly changing hues correspond precisely to the various groupings of forces in the social movement. The forms of *thinking* always depend on the forms of *being*.*

"That the general interests of virtue will be effectually secured by the belief of a sufficient recompense in a future life, for all that has been well or ill done in this, will hardly be denied," said the *English* materialist Priestley.** The French *deist* Voltaire held the same opinion. The Patriarch of Ferney wrote a good deal of rubbish on this subject. As for the *French* materialist Holbach, he reasoned as follows:

"Almost all men believe in a God Who punishes and rewards; yet we find, in all lands, that the wicked are far greater in number than the good. If we would trace the real cause of such widespread corruption, we shall discover it in the religious ideas themselves, and not in the imaginary sources that the different religions of the world have invented so as to explain human depravation. Men are corrupt because they are almost everywhere ill-governed; they are vilely governed because religion has deified Sovereigns; the latter, assured of impunity and themselves perverted, have of necessity made their peoples miserable and wicked. Subdued to irrational masters, the peoples have never been guided by reason. Blinded by priestly imposters, their reason became useless to them...."***

Thus religion is seen as the main driving force in history. What we have before us is Bossuet in reverse! The author of *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* was convinced that religion arranged all things in the best of fashions while Holbach thought that it brought all things down to the worst of conditions. This difference was the only step forward made by the philosophy of history in the course of an entire century. The practical consequences of this step were tremendous, but it did not in the least help in an understanding of the historical facts. The "philosophers" were unable to escape from a vicious circle: on the one hand, man is a product of his social environment: "It is in educa-

* One and the same idea expressed by two men who are pursuing different practical ends often has two quite different meanings. Genuine religion in any country is, according to Holbach, the religion of the hangman. In essence, Hobbes says the same thing. How different is the meaning of these thoughts in the philosophies of these two men!

** *A Free Discussion of the Doctrine of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, in a Correspondence Between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley*, London, 1778, Introduction, pp. VIII-IX.

*** *Système de la Nature*, II, p. 219.

tion that we must seek the main source of men's vices and virtues, the errors and the truths that their heads are filled with, the praiseworthy or blamable habits they contract, and the qualities and talents they acquire..."* On the other hand, all the derangements of society spring from an "*ignorance of the most obvious principles of politics*". The social environment is created by "*public opinion*", i.e., by man. This fundamental contradiction appears time and again, in various forms, in the writings of Holbach, as it does, incidentally, in those of all the other "philosophers".

1. *Man is a product of the social environment.* Hence it follows with all logic that it is not *public opinion* that governs the world. "Men are merely what they are made by their organisation, as modified by habits, education, the example of others, government, and circumstances, whether lasting or momentary. Their religious ideas and their imaginary systems are forced to yield or to accommodate themselves to their temperament, their propensities, and their interests."** "...if one vouchsafes to examine things coolly, one will find that the name of God has always and only served on Earth as a pretext for human passions."*** "Objects about us, fleeting interests, ingrained habits and public opinion have a far greater impact than imaginary beings or speculation, which itself depends on that organisation."**** The force of "speculation" and of "imaginary beings" is the more negligible because one could scarcely find two men out of a hundred thousand who would ask themselves what is to be understood by the word "God", and because people are induced to action, not by the general considerations of reason but by passions, as was already noted by Bayle and, before him, by Seneca.*****

2. *Man is a product of the social environment.* As for the gods, man has created them in his own image. "When he worships God, it is himself that man worships."*) (Cf. Feuerbach.) Is it not obvious that a wilful God, susceptible to praise and eager for constant asseverations of devotion from his subjects, has been created in the image of earthly sovereigns?**)

3. *Man is a product of the social environment.* "If we give but a little thought to what passes before our eyes, we shall discern the imprint of administration" (i.e., of "government"; we shall now see why and how, to the "philosophers", the influence of the social environment was nothing but that of government) "on the

* *Système social*, I, p. 15.

** *Système de la Nature*, II, p. 298.

*** *ibid.*, p. 294.

**** *ibid.*, p. 292.

***** *ibid.*, pp. 248 and 295.

*) *Le bon sens*, I, p. 57.

**) *Le Christianisme dévoilé*, p. 176.

character, *opinions*, laws, customs, education and morals of peoples."* "It is therefore the vices of Society that make its members bad.... Man becomes a wolf to his fellows."**

The other side of the antinomy:

1. *The social environment is engendered by "public opinion", i.e., by men.* Hence it follows quite logically that public opinion governs the world, and that mankind has become unfortunate in consequence of error (see above).

"If we consult experience, we shall see that it is in religious illusions and opinions that we should seek for the real source of the host of evils that we everywhere see overwhelming mankind. Ignorance of natural causes has led it to create its Gods; deception has made the latter terrible; a baneful concept of them has pursued man without making him any better, made him tremble uselessly, filled his mind with chimeras, opposing the progress of reason, and hindering the search for happiness. These fears have made him the slave of those who deceived him under the pretext of caring for his good; he did evil when he was told that his Gods called for crimes; he lived in adversity because he was made to hear that his Gods had condemned him to misery; he never dared to resist his Gods or to cast off his fetters, because it was drummed into him that stupidity, the renunciation of reason, spiritual torpor and abasement of the soul were the best means of winning eternal bliss."***

2. *The social environment is engendered by public opinion, i.e., by men.* "Nothing less than a Heaven-hallowed frenzy was needed to make beings that loved freedom and were constantly seeking for happiness believe that the depositaries of Public Authority had received from the Gods the right to enslave them and make them miserable. *Religions were necessary to endow the Divinity with the traits of a Tyrant so as to make men believe that unjust Tyrants were the earthly representatives of that Divinity.*"****

* *Système social*, III, p. 5. Grimm went even further *in this direction*. "The impact of the most bold opinions is usually equal to naught," he wrote. "Not a single book, however inspired, is capable of corrupting morals, in the same way as, unfortunately, it does not depend on any philosopher ... to perfect morals. Only government and legislation have that power, and it is after action by them that public morality finds its correct level of goodness or corruption; books have nothing to do with the matter" (*Correspondance littéraire*, janvier, 1772).

** *Politique naturelle*, I, pp. 11-12.

*** *Système de la Nature*, I, pp. 290-91. Here is how Suard defined public opinion: "By public opinion I mean the result of the truths and errors widespread in a nation, a result that determines its judgements on dignity or contempt, love or hate, a result that makes up its inclinations and habits, its shortcomings and merits—in a word, its morals and manners. It should be said that it is this public opinion that governs the world" (l.c., p. 400).

**** *Politique naturelle*, II, p. 11.

3. *The social environment is engendered by public opinion, i.e., by men.* "Why do we see Nations that were once noble by nature crushed by the shameful yoke of an oppressive Despotism? It is because public opinion has changed... because superstition, that accomplice of Tyranny, has succeeded in degrading souls and making them cowardly, fearful and unfeeling.... Why do we see Nations intoxicated with the commercial urge and a passion for riches?... It is because public opinion has persuaded them that money alone brings true happiness, though it is nothing but a deceptive substitute and contributes nothing to the public weal", etc., etc.* "The nations have never known of the true foundations of authority; they have not dared demand happiness of their kings, who are charged with providing them with it; they have thought their sovereigns, wearing the guise of Gods, are entitled by birth to command the rest of mortals.... As a consequence of such views, politics has degenerated into the deadly art of sacrificing the happiness of all to the whims of one man or of several privileged evildoers."**

It is not given to man to know whether the egg came before the animal, or vice versa; it was not given to the eighteenth-century materialists to know whether it is "public opinion" that creates the social environment, or vice versa. Indeed, nothing is harder for one who cannot abandon the metaphysical point of view than to reply to this question.

If, as Locke showed, inherited ideas do not exist; if man is nothing but "sensation", as the eighteenth-century materialists claimed; if our mental representations, i.e., "the images, the impressions received by our senses" arise thanks to our sensations; if "man is no more free in his thinking than he is in his actions", then it is very strange to seek in "public opinion" the secret of any action by man. Our mental representations are what they are made by the impressions we perceive. However, it is not Nature alone—in the proper sense of the term—that engenders those impressions in us. From birth, man comes under the power of the social environment, which moulds his brain, the latter being "soft wax adapted to receive all the impressions made on it."*** Consequently, he who would understand the history of "public opinion" must try to realise clearly what is meant by the history of the social environment, by the development of society. Such was the inescapable conclusion finally arrived at by sensualist materialism. Condillac's celebrated statue could calm down only when it had been able to attribute the shifts in its "opinions" to changes in its social relations, the relations with "its like".²⁷

* *Système social*, III, pp. 9-10.

** *Système de la Nature*, I, p. 291.

*** *Le bon sens*, I, p. 32.

So it was history that had to be appealed to. However, the "philosophers", who saw in history only mankind's conscious activities, could discern nothing in it but human "opinions". Consequently, they were bound to come up against the *antinomy*: opinions are *consequences* of the social environment; opinions are the *causes* of the various properties of that environment. That antinomy was bound more to confuse the "philosophers'" ideas because they held, as did all the metaphysicians, that *effect* and *cause*—at least in respect of social life—were immutable, immobile, and, so to say, petrified notions. It was only in the capacity of a metaphysician that Grimm could say that *the influence of opinions is equal to naught*.

The interaction between the various aspects of social life—such was the highest and "most philosophical" viewpoint that the "philosophers" could achieve. It was Montesquieu's point of view. However, interaction, that *closest truth of the relation between cause and effect*, as Hegel called it, explains nothing in the process of historical movements. "If one does not go beyond a consideration of content only from the viewpoint of interaction, then that is, in fact, a mode of consideration that contains absolutely no notion; we are then dealing with a dry fact, and the demand for mediation, which is the main motive for the application of the relation of causality, again remains unmet."*

However, things even more unpleasant than this may occur.

Man is a product of the social environment. The nature of the social environment is determined by the actions of "*government*". The actions of government and legislative activities pertain already to the field of the *conscious activities* of men. Such activities, in their turn, hinge on the "opinions" of those who act. One term of the antinomy (the thesis) has imperceptibly changed; it has become fully identical with its old opponent—the antithesis. It will seem that the difficulty has vanished, and the "philosopher" is continuing on the road of his "investigations" with an easy conscience. No sooner reached, the viewpoint of interaction has been rejected.

But that is not all. This seeming resolution of the antinomy is nothing but a complete break with materialism. The human brain, that "*soft wax*" shaped by the impressions produced by man's social environment, ultimately turns into the demiurge of the environment to which it owes its impressions. Incapable of any further advance, sensualist materialism retraces its steps along the selfsame road.

In the second place, the author of *Système de la Nature* would

* *Encyklopädie, erster Theil, herausgegeben von Leopold von Henning*, §§ 155-56 und Zusatz.

assure us that the influence of government on character, opinions, *laws*, customs, etc., is easily discernible. Consequently, government exerts an influence on laws. This seems very simple and perfectly obvious, but it means only that any people's civil law originates in its public law. One law hinges on another; "*laws*" on other "*laws*". The antinomy vanishes, but only because one of its terms, viz., that which was to have formulated the ultimate conclusion to be drawn by materialist sensualism, has proved in fact to be merely trivial tautology.

To end with all these difficulties, the following should have been done:

1. The metaphysical point of view should have been discarded, which precluded any idea of evolution and helplessly muddled the "philosophers'" logical concepts. Only then would it have been given "to know whether the egg preceded the animal, or the animal the egg, both in the natural and the historical sciences".

2. The essential conviction had to be arrived at that the "man's nature", which the eighteenth-century materialists operated with, provided no explanation at all of mankind's historical development. It was necessary to reach a stage above the viewpoint of natural science, i.e., the viewpoint of *social science*. It had to be realised that the social environment has its own laws of development, which are not dependent on man considered as a "sentient, thinking and rational creature", and, in their turn, exert a decisive influence on his senses, mental images and thoughts.

That task, as we shall see, was accomplished by nineteenth-century *dialectical* materialism. However, before speaking of its outstanding discoveries, we would like to review the views of a man whose example and dauntless logic did so much to reveal the insufficiency and paucity of metaphysical materialism. That man was *Helvetius*.

II HELVETIUS

"Helvetius, that elegant farmer-general and man of probity, disinterestedness and charity, whom Voltaire, in his flattering historical reminiscences, nicknamed Atticus, took it into his head to write a book; to bring that about, he collected, at gatherings of philosophers, invited by him to his table, their theories, views, and paradoxes; skilled in provoking interesting discussions, he brought into play now the sparkling wit of Diderot, now the sagacity of Suard or the witty and pungent mind of the Abbé Galiani; then he set forth, in a corpus of learning, all the various opinions he had so faithfully recorded. The outcome of these conversations, as heard, analysed and summed up, was the book *De l'Esprit*, that is to say, materialism in metaphysics, personal interest in morals."*

The reader now knows how Helvetius's main work came into being. In this particular instance, we can give the greater credence to Demogeot for this tattler merely having repeated a piece of fiction which has, for over a century, been passed on from one old literary gossip to another. Demogeot was a well-disposed gossip: he did not *say* anything bad of Helvetius; he left the surmising to the reader. There have been other and less well-disposed and more outspoken gossips. From them the reader learns that, in his investigations, our philosopher was motivated by an *excessive vanity*. It is to that vanity that we owe Helvetius's "sophisms"; it prevented him from creating something firm and fundamental. The gossips are always marked by an extraordinary perspicacity. It befits them greatly and invariably to engage in writing the history of literature and politics; in their exposition everything is plain and clear: you read them with great enjoyment, with little effort, and with tremendous benefit. You prefer them

* J. Demogeot, *Histoire de la littérature française depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours*, 22^e édition, Paris, 1886, pp. 493-94. The book forms part of *Histoire universelle* which was published by a group of professors under the editorship of V. Duruy.

to that brand of writers who, like the good old *Hegel*, would delve deeper into history than these gossips do. Such writers are fairly dull folk, but ... *audiat et altera pars*.

When he spoke of the part played by great men in history, Hegel fulminated against "*the petty study of man which, instead of taking as the object of research the general and essential features of human nature, occupies itself mainly with the particular and the fortuitous, with individual motivations, passions, and so on.*" In his opinion, "*great men wanted that which they did, and did that which they wanted*". The same, of course, "only in other words", can be said of all those who have worked with greater or lesser success for the benefit of mankind, this in accordance with their understanding of some particular field. It might also be said that "*the viewpoint of envy*" that Hegel held in such contempt in no way helps us understand and appraise the various periods of history. It might be said ... but then, so much might be said. but will that be listened to? The gossips get a far better hearing. For instance, when they assert that Helvetius was a dangerous sophist, and a vain and shallow man, they remain highly pleased with themselves, their wit and their integrity, and pronounce judgement.

Helvetius comes in for especially scurvy treatment at the hands of the German historians. In France, his character still gets its due at times,* but inappropriate lenity towards this "dangerous" man is eschewed in Germany. In that country, Helvetius has been reviled even more than *La Mettrie* has. Though the latter was quite "dangerous", His Majesty Frederick the Great of blessed memory was pleased to pronounce some gracious words about him after his death. *Voluntas regis suprema lex*, German scholars are aware of that more than anybody else, and that because they are scholars.

What a surprising fact! Though Helvetius's theories alarmed even the "philosophers", his opponents including men of Diderot's calibre, he was attacked in France much more *after* the Revolution than *before* it. Laharpe acknowledged that his refutation of this man's "sophisms" in 1788 *produced a far weaker impression* than it did nine years later, in 1797. Only then was it realised, Laharpe said, that materialist philosophy was an "*armed doctrine*", a revolutionary doctrine. In 1797, the bourgeoisie no longer stood in need of such theories, which would be a constant threat to its gains; materialism had to be done with, and done with it was, the question never arising whether the proofs provided by syco-

* "How illusions born of the spirit of system should be mistrusted! Helvetius had virtues, but his book is the destruction of all virtue" (La Harpe, *Réutation du livre "De l'Esprit"*, prononcée au Lycée républicain, dans les séances des 26 et 29 mars et des 3 et 5 avril, Paris, l'an V [1797], p. 87).

phants like Laharpe were really as valid as they had been depicted. New times produce new aspirations, the latter producing new philosophies.*

As for the gossips, they had good reason to complain of Helvetius. Only on rare occasions could they understand him, and not merely because his thoughts were beyond the range of their comprehension. Helvetius had an original manner of expressing his theories, one capable of putting the gossips out of countenance. He respected less than any other writer of his time that which Nordau called a *conventional lie*. A man of the world and a keen observer, he had an excellent knowledge of eighteenth-century French "Society"; a pungent and satirical writer, he never missed an opportunity of telling that society several home truths that were hard to swallow and had nothing in common with the innocent truths that always "fall so trippingly from the tongue". Hence the countless misunderstandings that ensued. What he had to say about his contemporaries was taken for his *ideal*. Madame de Boufflers said of him that he had laid bare every man's secret.²⁸ She thought that therein lay all the value and significance of his *De l'Esprit*. This quid pro quo also resulted in the following: when the subject of respect for "virtue" arose, Helvetius said that, in "*despotic empires*", it was held in contempt, its name alone being paid tribute to. "If it is invoked every day, and if it is demanded of citizens, it is a matter, in this case, of a truth that is asked for on condition that one will be sufficiently prudent to say nothing of it." This proposition won approval from Madame de Boufflers, who called it correct, witty and delicious, and asserted that it revealed every man's secret. Helvetius went on to explain why things could not be different from what he said they were. He showed how, in despotic states, people's *interests* made them hate "virtue". Again Madame de Boufflers agreed. Then there would come along some *Lampe*,

* Marat also disliked Helvetius. He considered this philosopher merely "a false and superficial mind", his "system" absurd, and his book "a continuous tissue of sophisms carefully embellished with a conceited show of a vast erudition". (Cf. *De l'homme ou des principes et des lois de l'influence de l'âme sur le corps et du corps sur l'âme* par Jean-Paul Marat, docteur en médecine, Amsterdam, 1775, pp. XV, XVI, des Discours préliminaire). This book by Marat does not belong to the revolutionary period of his life. Besides, the opinions of revolutionaries are not always revolutionary opinions. According to Marat, "Man, like any animal, is composed of two distinct substances—Soul and Body".... "Eternal Wisdom" has placed the Soul in the *envelope of the brain* (!). "It is the fluid of the nerves that is the link of communications between these two disparate substances" "The nervous fluid is the prime agent in mechanical acts. In free acts, it is subordinate to the soul and becomes the instrument it uses to perform them" (I, pp. 24, 40, 107). All this is amazingly trite. In his interpretation of his predecessors and his irritable self-esteem, Marat is highly reminiscent of Dühring.

usually a German but sometimes a Frenchman, who, in his turn, raised his voice, saying that Helvetius lauded a contempt for virtue. When it came to love, Helvetius said that wherever "the wealthy and the grand" took no part in government, they had to engage in amorous adventures as the best antidote to *ennui*. At this, Madame de Boufflers smiled archly: this gracious blue stocking was better aware of that than the philosopher was. The latter, however, did not stop at that; he asked himself how love could become an occupation. He found that "love should be surrounded with perils; that a vigilant jealousy should incessantly stand in the way of the lover's desires, and that the lover should incessantly be finding ways of catching his lady love off her guard". He arrived at the conclusion that, in such conditions, "*a coquette ... is a delightful mistress*". Again Madame de Boufflers agreed. But then there appeared on the scene a Frau *Buchholtz*,²⁹ who, pale with indignation, accused our philosopher of glorifying coquetry and attacking womanly virtue, the tested virtue of Frau Buchholtz, and so on and so forth. This kept on being repeated without end, and spreading. Such misunderstanding of Helvetius has lasted down to our days, and is embedded in the minds of those who have never read him. Incidentally, reading Helvetius would hardly change anything, for he would be read only through the eyes of Frau Buchholtz, a very near-sighted lady, though highly virtuous and most reputable.

Was Helvetius, in the strict sense of the word, what might be called a materialist? This is often doubted, because of his reputation.

"The thoughtful and reserved Buffon, the reticent and diplomatic Grimm, and the vain and superficial Helvetius," said the late Lange, "all stood close to materialism, without adhering to any firm viewpoint or any consistent accomplishment of a fundamental idea, which distinguished La Mettrie, despite all his frivolity of expression."* Jules-Auguste Soury, a French re-echoer of this German neo-Kantian, repeated the same opinion word for word.**

We would like to look into the matter with our own eyes.

The question whether there exists in man a non-material substance to which he owes his mental life did not come within the orbit of Helvetius's studies. He touched upon the matter only en passant, and dealt with it most cautiously. On the one hand, he did not want to irritate the censors, for which reason he spoke with obvious deference of the Church, which had "*established our faith on this point*". On the other hand, he disliked flights of "philosophical fancy". We must follow up an observation, he

* *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 2. Aufl., Iserlohn, 1873, I, S. 360.

** *Bréviaire de l'histoire du matérialisme*, Paris, 1883, pp. 645-46.

said, halt at the moment it leaves us, and have the courage not to know what cannot yet be known. This smacks of "reserve" rather than of "vanity" or the "superficial". Lange would have sensed and noted this had it concerned some less "dangerous" writer. But since he was dealing with Helvetius, he used a different yardstick: he thought it obvious that the "*vain*" and "*superficial*" author of *De l'Esprit* could be nothing but "*vain*" and "*superficial*".*

In all the fundamental questions of "*metaphysics*" (for instance: matter, space, the infinite, and the like) Helvetius in fact shared the views of the English materialist *John Toland*. That can be seen from a comparison of the latter's *Letters to Serena* (London, 1704) with *De l'Esprit*, Discours I, ch. IV. To Lange, Toland was undoubtedly an outstanding materialist, whose ideas he considered *as clear as was only possible*; as for Helvetius, he had merely "drawn close" to materialism, because his "superficiality" prevented him from firmly adhering to any basic idea. "*That is how history is written.*" How pernicious is the influence of "superficial" people: the "*soundest of men*" grow *superficial* when they read from the latter.

Is matter capable of sensation? "This subject was debated very long and very vaguely," said Helvetius. "It was much later that people presumed to ask themselves what the argument was all about, and to attach a precise idea to the word "matter". If its meaning had been determined in the first place, it would have been recognised that men were, if I might say so, the creators of matter, that matter was not some kind of creature; that there were, in Nature, only *individuals* that had been given the name of *bodies*, and that one could understand by the word "matter" only a collection of properties common to all bodies. The meaning of this word having been thus defined, it would remain only to learn ... whether the discovery of such a force as attraction, for instance, could not lead up to the surmise that bodies could also possess several unknown properties, such as the faculty of sensation which, while manifesting itself only in the organised bodies of animals, might nevertheless be common to all individuals. The question having been reduced to this point, one could see that, if it was impossible to demonstrate that all bodies were

* In Helvetius's opinion, we consider as *evident* only our own existence, on the contrary, the existence of other bodies is only a *probability*, "a probability which is no doubt very great and, in practical life, tantamount to manifestness, yet is only probability". Anyone else voicing something of the kind would have been ranked by Lange among the "critical" minds. However, no "criticism" was able to rehabilitate Helvetius and remove the blot of "*superficiality*", which was the first to strike the eye of this thorough historian of materialism.

absolutely insensible, no man unenlightened on this subject by "revelation" (we know the significance of such deference, in the "philosophers", for "revelation" and Church dogmata in general—*G.P.*) could solve the problem otherwise than by calculating and comparing the probability of this opinion with that of the contrary opinion.

"Consequently, to end this argument, there was no need at all to construct various systems of the world, lose one's way in a combination of possibilities, and make prodigious mental efforts, which led, and could not but have actually led, to more or less ingenious errors."*

This lengthy quotation shows equally well both the affinity between the materialism of *Helvetius* and that of *Toland*,** and the nature of what one would like to call *Helvetius's* scepticism or probabilism. In his opinion, however, it was not the materialists but the idealists of various schools who engaged in "*flights of philosophical fancy*"; he recommended to them such things as prudence, caution and due account of probabilities. Such prudence and caution would have shown them that their denial of the sensibility of matter was a figment of their imagination, and that it was not the properties of "*bodies*" but only the *definition* of matter, i.e., a single word that was preventing them from uniting the notion of body with the faculty of sensation. Here scepticism was merely a weapon directed against the enemies of materialism. It was the same when *Helvetius* spoke of the "*existence of bodies*". The faculty of sensation in matter was only a probability! Quite true, but what did that prove against the materialists? After all, the very existence of bodies was, in its turn, merely a probability, yet it would be absurd to deny it. That was how *Helvetius's* thinking proceeded, and if it did prove anything at all, it was primarily that his sceptical doubts had left him.

Helvetius knew just as well as his contemporaries did that we get a knowledge of bodies *only through the sensations* they

* *De l'Esprit*, Discours I, chap. IV.

** This affinity seems due to *Helvetius* having had ascribed to him a book entitled *Les progrès de la Raison dans la recherche du vrai*, which was republished in the Paris edition of his works in 1818. The book does not contain a single page of original writing. It consists partly of a translation of some of *Toland's Letters to Serena* to which were appended several passages from *Système de la Nature* and other more or less known books of the time. All these were carelessly put together and poorly understood by the unknown "author". *Helvetius* could not have had anything to do with such a work.

Another book exists, which was ascribed to him: *Le vrai sens du Système de la Nature*. It may have been written by him but we have no firm evidence on this score, and shall refrain from quoting from it, the more so because it adds nothing to what can be found in his books *De l'Esprit* and *De l'Homme*.

produce in us. This again proves that Lange was in error in asserting that "*materialism stubbornly takes the world of sensory appearance for the world of real things.*"* This, however, did not prevent Helvetius from being a convinced materialist. He quoted a "*famous English chemist*" whose opinion concerning the sensibility of matter he obviously shared. Here is what that chemist said: "We distinguish, in bodies, two kinds of properties; those whose existence is permanent and unalterable, such as impenetrability, weight, mobility, etc. These qualities pertain to general physics. But these same bodies possess other qualities whose fleeting and short-lived existence is successively produced and destroyed by certain combinations, analyses or movements in the internal particles. These kinds of properties form different branches of natural history: chemistry, etc.; they pertain to the special branches of physics. Iron, for example, is composed of phlogiston (inflammable substance) and a special kind of earth. In this state of composition, it is subject to the attractive power of a loadstone. But when iron is decomposed, this property is destroyed. A loadstone has no action on ferruginous earth that has been deprived of phlogiston...."

"Now why is it that, in the animal kingdom, organisation does not produce in like manner the singular quality called the faculty of sensation? All phenomena in medicine and natural history clearly prove that this power is the result, in animals, only of the structure of their bodies, that this faculty begins with the formation of their organs, is preserved while they live, and is finally lost by the dissolution of these same organs."

"If the metaphysicians ask me what then happens with the animal's faculty of sensation, I will reply that the same thing takes place as with the power of decomposed iron to be attracted by a loadstone."**

* *Geschichte des Materialismus*, I, S. 378. It is surprising how Lange finds "an element" of the Kantian doctrine in Robinet, who said of a thing-in-itself only what was said by Holbach and Helvetius. It is no less surprising that the author of *De la Nature* is numbered among the materialists by Lange, while Helvetius is considered merely to have *approached* them. What a strange criterion Lange was guided by!

** Quoted from the book *De l'Homme*, section II, chap. II. In the 1773 edition of this book, it is indicated that the quotation was from *A Treatise on the Principles of Chemistry*, which we have been unable to locate. However, we can quote what Priestley said in his discussion with Price: "To make my meaning, if possible, better understood, I will use the following comparison. The power of *cutting*, in a razor, depends upon a certain cohesion, and arrangement of the parts of which it consists. If we suppose this razor to be wholly dissolved in any acid liquor, its power of cutting will certainly be *lost*, or *cease to be*, though no particle of the metal that constituted the razor be annihilated by the process; and its *former shape, and power of cutting*, etc., may be restored to it after the metal has been precipitated. Thus when the body is dissolved by putrefaction, its power of thinking entirely ceases..."

Helvetius was not merely a *materialist*; he was the most "*consistent*" of his contemporaries in his adherence to the fundamental idea in materialism. He was so "*consistent*" that he horrified the other materialists, none of whom had the boldness to follow him in his daring conclusions. In this sense, he did indeed only stand "close" to such men as Holbach, since they could merely *approach* him.

The soul within us is nothing more than the faculty of sensation, the intellect being the outcome of that faculty. Everything in man is sensation. "Physical sensibility is the prime source of his needs, his passions, his sociability, his ideas, judgements, desires and actions.... Man is a machine which, put into movement by physical sensibility, must do everything that it performs."* Thus, Helvetius's point of departure is absolutely identical with that of Holbach. Such was the foundation that our "dangerous sophist" built on. Let us now take a closer look at what was original in his edifice's architecture.

What is meant by virtue? There was not a single eighteenth-century philosopher who did not discuss this question after his own manner. To Helvetius, the question was a very simple one: virtue consisted in a knowledge of people's obligations to one another. Consequently it presupposed the formation of a society.

"Had I been born on a desert island and left to my own devices, I would have lived there without vice and without virtue; I would have been able to manifest neither one nor the other. What, then, is to be understood by these words—*virtuous* and *vicious*? Actions that are useful or harmful to society. This simple and clear idea is, in my opinion, preferable to any obscure and high-flown bombast about virtue."**

The common weal—such is the measure and the foundation of virtue. Therefore our actions are the more *vicious*, the more *injurious* they are to society; they are the more *virtuous*, the more *useful* they are to it. *Salus populi—suprema lex.* Our philosopher's "virtue" is, first and foremost, *political* virtue. The *preaching*

(A *Free Discussion of the Doctrine of Materialism*, etc., London, 1778, pp. 82, 83). This was indeed the viewpoint of the *chemist* quoted by Helvetius. In this case, we are in no way interested in the religious views that Priestley was able to reconcile with his materialism. Neither is there any need to emphasise that the views on chemistry held by the materialists of the last century are not the views of our days.

* *De l'Homme*, section II, chap. X. Helvetius was well aware that man is endowed with memory. However, the organ of memory, he said, is purely physical, its function consisting in reviving our past impressions. It should therefore evoke actual sensations in us. Thus, it is all a matter of the faculty of sensation. Everything in man is sensation.

** *ibid.*, chap. XVI, the last note to this chapter.

of morality leads nowhere; preaching will never produce a hero. Society should be given an organisation that will teach its members to hold the common weal in respect.¹ *Corrupt morals* mean only a split between the social interest and the private. The legislator who knows how that dichotomy should be done away with is the best preacher of morality.

It is often claimed that John Stuart Mill's "utilitarianism" as a teaching of morality was far superior to the ethics of the eighteenth-century materialists, since the latter wanted to make personal advantage the foundation of morals, while the English philosopher brought into the foreground the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The reader can now see that, in this respect, John Stuart Mill's merit is more than doubtful. The happiness of the greatest number is merely a poor copy, without the least revolutionary tinge, of what the French materialists called the "common weal". If that is so, what is the source of the opinion that sees in John Stuart Mill's "utilitarianism" a felicitous modification of the eighteenth-century materialist doctrine?

What is the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people? It is a kind of *sanction* of human behaviour. In this sense, the materialists could draw upon nothing in Mill's celebrated book. However, the materialists were not content with the search for a *sanction*; facing them was the task of solving a *scientific problem*: how was man, if he was nothing more than sensation, to learn to appraise the common weal? Through what miracle could he forget his sensory impressions and achieve aims that would seem to have nothing in common with the latter? In the area and within the bounds of *this problem*, the materialists did actually take *personal interest* as the point of departure. But doing so meant, in this context, merely reiterating that man is a sentient being, and nothing more. Thus, to the materialists, personal interest was not a moral precept, but only a scientific fact.*

Holbach evaded the difficulty of this problem with the aid of obscure terminology. "Thus, when we say that interest is the sole motive of human actions, we want thereby to indicate that every man works in his own manner for his well-being, which he

* Charles Darwin was well aware of what the moralising philosophers understand but rarely: "It was assumed formerly by philosophers ... that the foundation of morality lay in a form of Selfishness; but more recently the 'Greatest happiness principle' has been brought prominently forward. It is, however, more correct to speak of the latter principle as the standard, and not as the motive of conduct", [Plekhanov is quoting from the German translation of Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man*] (*Die Abstammung des Menschen und die geschlechtliche Zuchtwahl*, Stuttgart, 1875, S. 154).

finds in some object, visible or hidden, real or imaginary, and that the entire system of his conduct is designed to obtain it...."* In other words, this meant that personal interest cannot simply be reduced to the demands of his "sensory impressions". At the same time, however, to Holbach, just as to all eighteenth-century materialists, man was merely sensation. There is a logical leap here, due to which Holbach's "ethics" evoked less abhorrence in the historians of philosophy than did Helvetius's ethics. In Lange's opinion, "*Holbach's ethics is rigorous and pure.*"** For his part, Hettner saw in it something substantially different from Helvetius's ethics.***

The author of *De l'Esprit* was the only eighteenth-century philosopher with the courage to touch upon the question of the origin of moral sentiments. He was alone in daring to infer them from man's "sensory impressions".

Man is susceptible to physical pleasure and physical suffering. He avoids the latter, and is drawn to the former. This constant and ineradicable avoidance and attraction bears the name of *self-love*, which is inseparable from man; it is his main sensation.

"Of all the senses, it is the only one of this kind: to it we owe all our desires, all our passions; these are merely the application of the sense of love of self to one object or another".... "Look into history books and you will see that, in all countries where certain virtues were encouraged by the hope for pleasures of the senses, such virtues were the most common and conferred the greatest lustre."**** Peoples that gave themselves up most to love were the most courageous, "because in their countries women accorded their favours only to the bravest". With the Samnites, the greatest beauty was the reward for the highest military prowess. In Sparta, the wise Lycurgus, convinced that "*pleasure is the sole and universal motive in men*", was able to turn love into an inspirer of bravery. During public holidays, young, fair, and semi-nude Lacedaemonian girls sang and danced at assemblies of the people, the words of their songs reviling the cowardly and lauding the brave. Only men of valour could expect favours from the fair sex. The Spartans therefore tried to be valiant: *amorous* passion inflamed in their hearts a *passion for glory*. However, the "wise" institutions set up by Lycurgus did not achieve the limits of the possible. Indeed, let us suppose that "after the example of the virgins consecrated to Isis or Vesta, the fairest Lacedaemonian maidens were

* *Système de la Nature*, London, 1781, I, p. 268.

** *Geschichte des Materialismus*, I, S. 363.

*** *Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Braunschweig, 1881, 2. T., S. 398.

**** *De l'Homme*, section IV, chap. IV; *De l'Esprit*, Discours III, chap. XV.

dedicated to rewarding merit; that, presented nude at the assemblies, they were carried off by the warriors as the prize for courage, and that the young heroes experienced, at one and the same instant, the double intoxication of love and glory: however strange and far-removed from our morals such legislation may be, it is certain that it made the Spartans more virtuous and valiant, because the strength of virtue is always proportionate to the degree of pleasure assigned as the reward...."

Here Helvetius speaks of a double intoxication—with love and glory. This should not be misunderstood. Everything in a thirst after glory can be reduced to sensory impressions. We love glory, just as we do wealth, *for the sake of the power* they confer. But what is power? It is a way to make others serve our happiness. But, in essence, happiness is reducible to sensual enjoyment. *Man is nothing but sensation*. All such passions as, for instance, a passion for glory, power, wealth and the like, are merely *artificial passions* which can be derived from physical needs. To better understand this truth, one should always remember that our sensations of enjoyment and suffering are of a double kind—*actual* enjoyment or suffering, and *foreseeable* enjoyment or suffering. I suffer the pangs of hunger, and I experience *actual suffering*; I foresee that I shall starve to death, and I experience *foreseeable suffering*. "...If a man who loves fair slave girls and beautiful pictures finds a treasure, he will be in transports. It will be said, however, that he does not as yet experience any physical pleasure. That is true, but at that moment he has acquired the means of obtaining the objects of his desires. Now this anticipation of pleasure at hand is already pleasure."

It goes without saying that *foresight* does not at all contradict Helvetius's point of departure. It is merely the result of *memory*. If I foresee that lack of food will cause me suffering, that is because I have already experienced such suffering. But the memory possesses the property of "exerting on our organs a certain degree, of the same influence" as suffering or enjoyment. "It is therefore evident that all pain and pleasures, which are considered internal, are so many physical sensations, and that by the words *internal* or *external* one should understand only impressions evoked either by the memory or by the actual presence of objects."

Since I am capable of foreseeing, i.e., of *sensory impressions*, I mourn the death of a friend, whose conversation helped to dispel my boredom, "that malaise of the spirit which is actually physical pain"; he would have risked his life and fortune to save me from death or suffering; he always tried, with the aid of pleasures of every kind, to increase my enjoyment. The consciousness that my friend's death has deprived me of my sources of pleasure brings the tears to my eyes.

"If one delves into the depths of one's soul and searches therein, one will see in all these sentiments only the development of physical pleasure or pain."

However, the objection might be raised, in reply to Helvetius, that your friend was prepared to risk life and fortune to rid you of suffering. You yourself have said so. Consequently, you have admitted that there exist people that are able to turn a deaf ear to your "sensory impressions" in order to achieve an ideal aim.

Our philosopher did not give a direct reply to this objection; it will, however, be readily understood that this would not have embarrassed him. What, he might have asked, is the motive of heroic actions? *The expectation of reward*. In such actions great dangers are courted, but the greater the danger, the greater the reward. Interest (the sensory impression) suggests that the game is worth the candle. If that is how matters stand with great and glorious exploits, a friend's self-denial has nothing extraordinary about it.

There are people who are devoted to science, ruin their health in poring over books and suffer all kinds of deprivation in order to amass knowledge. It might be said that love of science has nothing in common with physical enjoyment. That is not true. Why does the *miser* deny himself the *necessities of life*? Because he wants to increase his means of enjoyment tomorrow and the day after—in short, in the future. Excellent! Let us accept that the same kind of thing takes place with the *scholar or scientist*, and we shall have the answer to the riddle.

"The miser wants to have a magnificent castle, and the man of talent a fair woman; riches and a grand reputation are needed to achieve these aims. The two men work, each in his own way to build up—one his treasures, and the other his renown. But if, during the time employed to acquire that wealth or that reputation, they have grown old and have formed habits they cannot break without an effort precluded by their age, the miser and the man of talent will die, the former without his castle, and the latter without his mistress."*

All this was sufficient to evoke indignation in all "decent men" throughout the world and to explain how and why Helvetius acquired his ill fame. It was also sufficient to reveal the weakness in his "analysis". We shall add another quotation to those already given: "Moreover, in admitting that our passions originally take their source in physical sensibility, one might also think that, in the present conditions in the civilised nations, such passions exist independently of the cause that has produced them. I shall therefore try, in tracing the transformation of physical suffering

* *De l'Homme*, section II, chap. X.

and pleasure into their artificial counterparts, to show that, in such passions as avarice, ambition, pride and friendship, whose object would seem to least pertain to the pleasures of the senses, it is nevertheless always physical pain and pleasure that we shun or seek after.”*

And so, *no heredity*. According to Darwin, the “intellectual and moral faculties of man are variable; and we have every reason to believe that the variations tend to be inherited.”** According to Helvetius, man’s faculties are highly variable, but changes are not passed down from one generation to another, while their basis—the faculty of sensory impressions—remains unchanged. Helvetius was keen-sighted enough to discern the phenomena of evolution. He saw that “one and the same race of cattle grows stronger or weaker, advances or declines, according to the nature or abundance of grazing grounds”. He also noted that the same was true of *oaks*. “If one sees little oaks and tall ones, oaks growing straight or crooked, no one absolutely resembling the other, why is it so? It is, perhaps, because none of them gets exactly the same cultivation, or is put in the same kind of place, struck by the same kind of wind or sown in the same kind of soil.” This is a very reasonable explanation. But Helvetius did not stop at that, but asked himself: “*Do the differences between beings lie in their embryos or in their development?*” Such a question could not have arisen in a bigoted mind. Note, however, the content of the dilemma: *either* in the embryo *or* in development. Our philosopher did not even suspect that the history of a species can leave an imprint on the structure of the embryo. The history of a *species*? It did not exist for him or his contemporaries: he was interested only in individual; he was concerned only with *individual* “nature”, and observed only *individual* “development”. We are far from satisfied with Darwin’s theory of the heredity of inborn moral and intellectual faculties; it was just the first page in evolutionary natural science. But we know very well that, whatever results the latter may lead up to, it will meet with success only if the *dialectical method* is used in the study of phenomena whose nature is essentially dialectical. Helvetius remained a *metaphysician* even when he instinctively felt drawn to another and quite contrary point of view—the *dialectical*.

He confessed to “*knowing nothing*” of whether the difference between beings “lay” exclusively in their (*individual*) development. Such a hypothesis seemed too bold to him. Indeed, it would have

* *De l’Esprit*, Discours III, chap. IX.

** [Plekhanov is quoting from the German translation of Charles Darwin’s *The Descent of Man*] *Die Abstammung des Menschen*, Stuttgart, 1875, S. 166.

led up to what Lucretius, who was well-known to the materialist "philosophers", considered an egregious absurdity:

...*Ex omnibus rebus*
Omne genus nasci posset

Nec fructus idem arboribus constare solerent
*Sed mutarentur: ferre omnes omnia possent.**

However, when the problem was a limited one and the question was about a single species, i.e., *man*, Helvetius no longer entertained such doubts. He stated positively and with the utmost confidence that all "distinctions" between people lay in their development, not in their embryos or heredity: we all possess the same abilities at birth. It is only our upbringing that makes us different from one another. Below we shall see that this idea, though lacking the necessary substantial evidence, proved most revealing. However, he reached it along the *wrong avenue*, the origin of his thinking being obvious each time he drew upon it, and each time he tries to prove it. This thought shows that Diderot was absolutely right in saying that Helvetius's *statements* were far more forceful than his *proofs*. The metaphysical method in eighteenth-century materialism was constantly wreaking vengeance on the boldest and most logical of its followers.

We always feel an urge towards physical enjoyment and always try to avoid physical suffering. This is an important pronouncement. But how is it proved? Helvetius takes as his point of departure the mature grown-up man, with "passions" whose motivations are extremely numerous and complex and indubitably owe their origin to the *social environment*, i.e., to the *history of the species*, and attempts to deduce these "passions" from sensory impressions. Something that arises independently of the *mind* is presented to us as the immediate instant result of the selfsame mind. *Habit and instinct* assume the form of *reflection* evoked in man by one feeling or another. In our essay on Holbach, we established that this error was peculiar to all "philosophers" who came out in defence of utilitarian morality. In Helvetius, however, this error assumed regrettable proportions: in the picture he depicted, *reflection*, in the proper sense of the word, vanished, yielding place to a number of *mental images*, all of which, without exception, refer to "*sensory impressions*". Indubitably *an operative but most distant cause of our moral habits*, these become

* [... From any time
 Any genus can be born...

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 And trees would always yield
 Constant but changing fruit: anything could produce anything.]

the ultimate cause of our actions. Thus, a *fiction* is presented as the *solution* of the problem. It is, however, self-evident that the problem cannot be dissolved in the acid of fiction. Moreover, by his "analysis", Helvetius would deprive our moral sentiments of their specific features and thus *delete* that *x*, that unknown quantity, whose significance he would determine; he wanted to prove that all our sentiments are derived from sensory impressions: to prove his point, he depicted man as being in constant pursuit of pleasures of the flesh, "beautiful slave girls" and the like. In actual fact, his assertion is more telling than the proofs he adduces.

After all these explications, there is no need for us to emphasise, as was done by *Laharpe* and by many others, that it was not for possession of a beautiful mistress that *Newton engaged in his colossal mathematical calculations*. Of course, not! This truth, however, does not take us a single step forward either in the science of "man" or in the history of philosophy. There exist matters of far greater moment than the assertion of such "*truths*".

Can it be seriously thought that Helvetius could have imagined man only as a sensual and intelligent being? It will suffice to turn the leaves of his writings to see that this was not the case. He was well aware, for example, that there existed people who "transported in spirit into the future and anticipating the eulogies and the esteem of posterity"... renounced the glory and the esteem of the moment for the sometimes distant hope of winning greater glory and esteem; these were people who, on the whole, "desire only the esteem of estimable citizens".* They realised very clearly that they will not enjoy *much sensual pleasure*. Helvetius went on to say that there were people *who held nothing higher than justice*, and explained that, in such people's memories, the idea of justice was closely linked with that of happiness, the two ideas forming a single and indivisible whole. The habit appeared of recollecting them simultaneously, and "once this habit has become established, it is a matter of pride to be always just and virtuous, and then there is nothing one will not sacrifice to that noble pride."** To be guided by justice, such people, of course, no longer needed to bring up voluptuous pictures in their minds. Moreover, our philosopher voiced the opinion that man is made just or unjust by his *upbringing*, that the power of the latter is boundless, and that "*a man of morality is entirely the product of upbringing and imitation*".*** He spoke of the *mechanism* of our sentiments and the force of the *association of ideas*

* *De l'Homme*, section IV, chap. VI.

** *ibid.*, chap. X, the last note to this chapter.

*** *ibid.*, chap. XXII.

in the following terms: "If, because of the form of government, I have everything to fear from high personages, I shall automatically respect any grandeur, even in a foreign lord who can do nothing against me. If, in my memory, I have associated the idea of virtue with that of happiness, I shall cultivate virtue even when it becomes an object of persecution. I am well aware that these two ideas will ultimately become disunited, but that will be the work of time, even of a long time". In conclusion he added: "It is only after deep thought on this fact that one will find the solution to an infinity of moral problems that cannot be solved without a knowledge of this association of our ideas".* But what does all this mean? A mass of contradictions, one more howling than another? Indubitably so! The *metaphysicians* often fall victim to such contradictions. Contradicting themselves at every step is a kind of occupational disease with them, their only way of reconciling their built-in dilemma. Helvetius was far from an exception to this general rule. On the contrary, a lively and searching mind, he paid in this coin more frequently than others for the errors of his method. The fact of this error has to be established, thus showing the advantages of the dialectical method, but it should not be thought that such errors can be eradicated by inappropriate moral indignation, or by several infinitely petty truths, which, into the bargain, are as old as the world.

"One notices, as one reads him," Laharpe wrote of our philosopher, "that his imagination is inspired only by brilliant and voluptuous ideas: nothing is less befitting to the mind of the philosopher."** This means that Helvetius spoke of "sensory impressions" and made them the point of departure for his research, only because he was excessively inclined to sensual motivations. There are many stories about his love of "beautiful mistresses"; this love was depicted as supplementing his vanity. We shall refrain from any appraisal of such "critical" devices. However, we consider it of interest to draw a comparison, in this respect, between *Helvetius* and *Chernyshevsky*. The great *Russian Enlightener* was anything but an "elegant" man, or a "farmer-general", or "vain" (nobody ever accused him of this weakness), or a lover of "beautiful slave girls". Yet, of all the eighteenth-century French philosophers, Helvetius resembles him the most closely. In substantiating some assertion he had made, Chernyshevsky was marked by the same logical fearlessness, the same contempt for sentimentality, the same method, the same kind of tastes, the same rationalist mode of adducing proof, and often by the

* *ibid.*, section VIII, chap. IV.

** *Réputation du livre "De l'Esprit"*, p. 8.

same conclusions and examples, down to the most minute.* How is such a coincidence to be accounted for? Is this plagiarism on the part of the Russian writer? Till now nobody has made so bold as to hurl such an accusation against Chernyshevsky. Let us imagine that grounds exist for that. Then we should have to say that Chernyshevsky stole Helvetius's ideas, which, in their turn, derived from the latter's voluptuous temperament and boundless vanity. What astounding clarity! What a profound philosophy of the history of human thought!

In taking note of Helvetius's errors, we should not forget that he was mistaken on the very same point as all *idealist* (or rather *dualist*) philosophy had been, which had waged a struggle against French materialism. Spinoza and Leibnitz sometimes made very skilful use of the dialectical weapon (especially the latter in *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*), yet their common stand remained metaphysical. Besides, *Leibnitz* and *Spinoza* played a far from leading role in French official eighteenth-century philosophy, which was dominated by a more or less modified and vulgarised Cartesianism. The latter, however, contained not the faintest notion of development.** Helplessness of method was, in certain measure, something that *materialism* inherited

* Helvetius recommended following the example of the geometers. "If some complex problem in mechanics is proposed to them, what do they do? They simplify it; they calculate the speed of bodies in movement, disregarding their density, the resistance of the surrounding fluids, the friction of other bodies, etc." (*De l'Homme*, section IX, chap. 1). In almost the same terms, Chernyshevsky recommended *simplification* of problems of political economy. Helvetius was accused of having slandered Socrates and Regulus. But what Chernyshevsky said of the celebrated suicide of the chaste Lucretia, who did not wish to go on living after her violation, is remarkably reminiscent of Helvetius's thoughts about the heroic captive of the Carthaginians. Chernyshevsky thought that political economy should deal mainly, not with that which exists but with that which *should* be. Compare this with what Helvetius wrote in a letter to Montesquieu: "Remember that during a discussion at La Brède" (about Montesquieu's *Principes*), "I acknowledged that they apply to the actual conditions; but that a writer who would be useful to people should occupy himself with true maxims in a future and better order of things, rather than with canonising principles that become dangerous from the moment they are taken over by prejudice, with the purpose of utilising and perpetuating them" (Cf. *Œuvres complètes d'Helvétius*, Paris, 1818, III, p. 261). Many other examples might be added to this surprising one, but we prefer to show the coincidence in the views of these two writers, who were separated by almost a century, only inasmuch as the opportunity has presented itself in our account of Helvetius's theory.

** "Descartes," says *Flint*, "shows incidentally in many passages of his writings that he had looked on social facts with a clear and keen gaze. And so does Malebranche." But the selfsame *Flint* acknowledges that "of a science of history Descartes had no notion whatever", and that "it was only with the decay of Cartesianism that historical science began to flourish in France..." (cf. *The Philosophy of History in France and Germany*, Edinburgh and London, 1874, pp. 76-78).

from its *dualist* precursors: one should not deceive oneself on that score. If the materialists are wrong, that in no way means that their opponents are right. Nothing of the kind! Their opponents are doubly and trebly mistaken—in short, infinitely more.

What do we learn of the origin of our moral sentiments from Laharpe, who undoubtedly missed no opportunity of aiming all the heavy guns of the good old philosophy against Helvetius? Alas, very little! He assures us that “all our passions are given *directly by Nature*” that they “*are of our nature*” (italicised by Laharpe), “though they may become excessive only as a result of the corruption of grand societies”. He goes on to tell us that “society is of a natural order”, so that Helvetius was “utterly mistaken in calling artificial that which results from a natural and necessary order”; that man has “another measure for his judgements than his own interest”, and that “that measure is a sense of justice”; that “pleasure and affliction can be sole driving force in the lower animals alone”; but “God, conscience, and the laws that derive from these two—that is what man should be guided by”. * Very profound this, is it not? At last matters have been made quite clear!

Let us now cast an admiring glance at another opponent of our “sophist”, this time a man of the nineteenth century. After reading in *De l'Esprit* that the common interest is the measure of virtue, that any society considers those actions virtuous that are beneficial to it, and that men's judgements of the actions of those about them undergo change in keeping with their interests, this man gave vent, with triumphant mien, to a veritable spate of words: “If it is asserted that the public's judgements regarding individual actions are entitled to infallibility inasmuch as they are backed by the majority of individuals, then a number of conclusions drawn from this principle have to be recognised, each more absurd than the next one, as, for instance: only the opinions of the majority are in agreement with the truth.... Truth becomes delusion when it ceases from being the opinion of the majority and turns into the opinion of the minority, and, conversely, delusion becomes truth when it becomes the opinion of the majority after having been for long the opinion of the minority.”**

* *Réfutation du livre “De l'Esprit”*, pp. 57, 61, 63, 68 et 69.

** *Nouvelle réfutation du livre “De l'Esprit”*, à Clermont-Ferrand, 1817, p. 46. The anonymous author's method of adducing proofs reminds one of the arguments used by the highly learned—“learned!”—Damiron. At the beginning of *De l'Esprit*, Helvetius wrote that man owes his superiority over the animals, among other reasons, to the structure of his extremities. “You think,” Damiron thunders, “that giving the horse man's hands would endow it with man's mind. It would give it nothing except making it impos-

What a naive man! His refutation of Helvetius, whose theories he was never able to grasp, is indeed marked by "novelty".

Even people of far greater calibre, such as, for instance, Lange, see in this doctrine nothing but an apologia for "personal interest". It is considered axiomatic that Adam Smith's doctrine of morals has nothing in common with the French materialists' ethics. These two doctrines are antipodes. Lange, who expressed only disdain for Helvetius, had the highest esteem for Adam Smith as a moralist. "Adam Smith's inference of morality from sympathy," he wrote, "although insufficiently grounded even for the time, still remains, down to our days, one of the most productive attempts at a natural and rational substantiation of morality." Baudrillart, the French author of a commentary on *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* considered it a healthy reaction against "the systems of materialism and selfishness". Smith himself felt hardly any "sympathy" for the materialists' systems of ethics. He must have found Helvetius's theory, like *Man-devilles*, "exuberant". Indeed, at first glance, Smith's theory seems the opposite of what we find in the works of Helvetius. The reader, we hope, has not yet forgotten how the latter accounts for the regret we feel over the loss of a friend. Let us now read what the celebrated Englishman wrote on the matter: "We sympathise even with the dead.... It is miserable, we think, to be deprived of the light of the sun; to be shut out from life and conversation; to be laid in the cold grave, a prey to corruption and the reptiles of the earth; to be no more thought of in this world, but to be obliterated in a little time, from the affections, and almost from the memory, of their dearest friends and relations.... That our sympathy can afford them no consolation seems to be an addition to their calamity"*...., etc. This is, of course, something quite different! But let us take a closer look at this argument. What is meant by Adam Smith's "sympathy"? "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.... That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it." The source of this sensitiv-

sible for it to live as a horse" (*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la philosophie au dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, 1858, I, p. 406). In just the same manner, a certain naive professor of divinity in St. Petersburg disputed Darwin's theory: "Throw a hen into the water," he said, "and, according to Darwin, it will at once grow webs between its digits. I, however, affirm that the poor animal will perish most miserably."

* *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, London, 1873, pp. 12, 13. This work was first published in 1757.

ity to the sorrow of others is seen in the following: "...As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation...."* Do you think there is nothing resembling this theory of sympathy in the works of Helvetius? In his book *De l'Homme* (sect. II, ch. VII) he asks himself what is meant by a humane man, and replies: "*One to whom the spectacle of the misery of others is a mournful spectacle.*" But what does this ability to feel another's sorrow derive from? We owe it to memories that teach us to identify ourselves with others. "If the child has acquired the habit of identifying itself with the unfortunate, it is the more moved by their misery that, in deploring their plight, it shows compassion for mankind as a whole, and consequently for itself in particular. An infinity of various sentiments then blend with the initial feeling, the sum of these comprising an overall feeling of pleasure which rejoices a noble soul, while giving relief to the unfortunate, a feeling *he is not always able to analyse.*"

The reader will agree that Smith regarded the point of departure in his conclusion—sympathy—in exactly the same way. Helvetius, however, associated sympathy with other and less attractive sentiments. In his opinion, "*One consoles the unfortunate:* 1) to get rid of the physical pangs caused by the view of their sufferings; 2) to enjoy the spectacle of gratitude, which evokes in us at least a vague hope of some distant advantage; 3) to perform an act of power, the exercise of which is always pleasant, because it creates in our minds an image of the pleasures associated with that power; 4) because the idea of happiness is always associated, given good education, with the idea of charity; since that charity, by winning us the esteem and affection of people, can be regarded, like wealth, as a power or means to escape from affliction and derive pleasure." Of course, this is not quite what Smith said, but it changes nothing in what pertains to sympathy; it shows that Helvetius arrived at results quite the reverse of the conclusions drawn by the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. To the latter, the sense of sympathy is inherent in our "nature"; to Helvetius, our nature contains merely a "sensory impression". He saw himself constrained to break down into components that which Smith did not even think of touching upon. Smith advanced in one direction; Helvetius chose the *opposite* direction. What grounds are there for surprise if they diverged more and more, and ultimately never met again?

No doubt Helvetius was in no way inclined to pass all our feelings through the filter of sympathy as one of the stages of

* op. cit., pp. 9, 10.

their development. In this respect, he was not "one-sided". Smith's "sympathy" made him eschew the *utilitarian* point of view. To him, just as to Helvetius, social interest provided the foundation and sanction for morality.* Only it never occurred to him to deduce that foundation and sanction from the primary elements of human nature. He did not ask himself what formed the foundation of the "supreme wisdom" that controlled the system of human proclivities. He saw a naked *fact* where Helvetius could already see a *process of development*. "That whole account of human nature, however," Smith remarked, "which deduces all sentiments and affections from self-love ... seems to me to have arisen from some confused misapprehension of the system of sympathy."** He should have said that that system was an attempt to reveal the *origin* of our affections and sentiments, whilst he himself was content with a more or less competent *description* of them.***

The contradictions Helvetius was entangled in were, as we have pointed out several times, a consequence of his metaphysical method. There were also many contradictions caused by his often narrowing his *theoretical point of view* in order to bring out the possibility and ease of achieving certain practical aims. This, incidentally, is to be seen in the instance of our author's "slander" of Regulus.

Helvetius was out to prove that, as a military leader and in keeping with ancient Roman customs, Regulus could not have acted otherwise than he did, even were he pursuing his private ends. This was the "slander" that aroused *Jean-Jacques's* indignation. However, Helvetius did not at all mean that Regulus had *really* pursued his own ends. "*Regulus's deed was, no doubt,*

* "We do not love our country merely as a part of the great society of mankind: we love it for its own sake, and independently of any such consideration. That wisdom which contrived the system of human affections, as well as that of every other part of nature, seems to have judged that the interest of the great society of mankind would be best promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and of his understanding..." (op. cit., pp. 203, 204).

** *ibid.*, p. 281.

*** All this is quite plain, yet seems hard to understand. "Virtue," said Huxley, "is undoubtedly beneficent; but the man is to be envied to whom her ways seem in anywise playful.... The calculation of the greatest happiness is not performed quite so easily as a rule of three sum.... The moral law ... rests in the long run upon instinctive intuitions..." [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of Huxley's *Hume. (English Men of Letters)* (*Hume, sa vie, sa philosophie*, trad. par G. Compayré, Paris, 1880, pp. 281, 284). If the great English natural scientist wished to disprove, by such considerations, eighteenth-century materialist morality, he was greatly in error and had forgotten his Darwin. Incidentally, he must have been thinking only of lesser men, such as Bentham and John Stuart Mill. In that case, he was right.

the effect of an impetuous enthusiasm that induced him to virtue." What, then, was the purpose of his "slander"? It was intended to show that "such enthusiasm could have been kindled in Rome alone". The Republic's most "perfect" legislation could intimately bind its citizens' private interests to those of the State.* Hence the heroism of the ancient Romans. *The practical conclusion to be drawn was that if people learnt to act in the same way, then heroic men such as Regulus would certainly appear.* For this conclusion to strike the reader, Helvetius showed him only one side of the question, but that is no proof of his having lost sight of the influence of habit, the association of ideas, "sympathies", "enthusiasm", noble pride, and so on. Nothing of the kind: he only was unable always to find the links between that influence and personal interest, or "sensory impressions", though he did try to do so, since he never forgot that *man is nothing but sensation.* If he did not cope with the task, it was only because of the metaphysical nature of the materialism of his times, but it will always stand to his credit that he drew all the conclusions from his fundamental principle.

The same predominance of the *practical trend* accounted for his perfunctory attitude to the question of whether all men are born with the same abilities. He could not even pose this question correctly. But what did he wish to say in touching upon it? This was very well understood by Grimm, who was no great theorist. In his *Correspondance littéraire* (November 1773), he wrote of *De l'Homme* in the following terms: "Its main purpose is to show that the genius, virtues and talents to which nations owe their grandeur and felicity are the effects, not of differences in food, temperament or the five senses, on which laws and administration exert no influence, but of education, over which laws and government have full control."** *The practical value* of this kind of view in times of revolutionary ferment can be readily understood.

* *De l'Esprit*, Discours III, chap. XXII.

** Holbach did not share this opinion of Helvetius's, though he called him a "celebrated moralist". It was, in his opinion, "mistaken to think that upbringing can do everything with man; it can only make use of the material given by Nature; it can sow successfully only in soil provided by Nature" (cf. *La morale universelle*, section V, chap. III; cf. also op. cit., section I, chap. IV). Holbach does not ask, besides, what part *society* provided in what he called the individual's *nature*. Incidentally, Helvetius was himself well aware that his view could not be precisely proved. He only thought that it could at least be asserted that "this influence" (i.e., that of organisation on the minds of fairly well-developed people) "was so small that it might be considered a negligible quantity in algebraic calculations, so that what had previously been ascribed to the effect of physical properties and had not been accounted for by this cause, was fully explicable by moral causes" (i.e., the influence of the social environment—*G.P.*). It was almost in the same terms that Chernyshevsky spoke of the influence of race on the destinies of peoples.

If man is nothing but a machine driven by "sensory impressions", a machine that *is obliged* to do everything done by the latter, then the role of "*free will*" in the life of any people or individual is equal to nil. If "sensory impressions" make up the principle of people's volitions, needs, passions, sociality, ideas, judgements and actions, then it is clear that the key to mankind's destinies should not be sought in man or his "*nature*"; if all men are equally endowed spiritually, then the imaginary features of race or national character cannot, of course, explain anything in a nation's present-day or past condition. These three logically inescapable conclusions are already highly important *prolegomena* to the philosophy of history as a whole.

According to Helvetius, all nations living *in the same conditions* have *the same kind of laws*, are marked by the same spirit, and are impelled by the same passions. "For this reason, *we find among the American Indians the customs of the ancient Germans*"; for this reason, "*Asia, inhabited for the most part by the Malaysans, is governed by our ancient feudal laws*"; for this reason, "*fetishism was not only the first of religions, but its cult, still preserved today in almost all of Africa, ... was once the universal cult*"; for the same reason, *Greek mythology* has many features similar to those in *Celtic mythology*; for the same reason, finally, the most various peoples often have the same *sayings*. In general, there exists an amazing similarity in the institutions, spirit and faiths of primitive peoples. Like individuals, peoples resemble one another *far more than it seems*.

Interest and *needs*—these are the great and only instructors of the human race. Why is hunger the usual cause of human actions? Because, of all of man's needs, it is the most frequent, the most imperative, and the most keenly felt. Hunger sharpens the intelligence of animals; it forces us to exercise our abilities—us humans, who imagine ourselves far superior to the animals. It teaches the savage to bend the bow, weave nets and set traps. "Again it is hunger that, with civilised peoples, makes all citizens work, till the soil, learn crafts, and perform any duty." Mankind owes to it the art of making the land fertile and fashioning ploughshares, in just the same way as the art of building and making clothes arose from the need to seek protection from the elements. *Without his needs, man would have no incentive to action*. "One of the principal causes of the ignorance and the sluggishness of Africans is the fertility of this part of the world; it meets all needs with almost no cultivation of the land. Therefore the Africans have no incentive to thinking, and they do little of it. The same can be said of the Caribs. If they are less industrious than the North American savages, it is because the latter have to work harder to feed themselves." *Needs provide an exact yardstick of the human*

spirit's resoluteness. "The inhabitants of Kamchatka, who in certain respects are of an unparalleled stupidity, are marvelously skilful in other ways. If it is a matter of making clothes, they excel Europeans in adroitness. Why? Because they inhabit a region of the world that is most intemperate in climate and where, by consequence, the need for clothing makes itself constantly felt. An habitual need is a constant spur."*

But if we owe the "art of tilling the soil" to the existence of needs, that art, once discovered and practised, begins to exert an important and even decisive influence on our institutions, ideas and sentiments. "The forest-dweller, a naked man, who has no speech, may of course have a distinct idea of strength or weakness, but none of justice and law". *Such ideas presuppose the existence of society; they change together with society's interests*. Why was theft permitted in Sparta? Why were thieves caught there red-handed punished only for their lack of adroitness? What could be stranger than that custom? "However, if one recalls the laws of Lycurgus and the contempt in which silver and gold were held in a republic, where the laws permitted the circulation only of coins of heavy and brittle iron, one will realise that thefts of poultry and vegetables were the only ones that could be committed. Such thievery, always carried out with adroitness and often denied with firmness, confirmed the Lacedaemonians in the practice of courage and vigilance: the law permitting theft could be very useful to such a people...." Let us see, on the other hand, how matters stood with the *Scythians*. They considered theft the most heinous of crimes, a view made inevitable by their mode of life. "Their herds grazed unguarded in the steppe; how easily they could have been stolen and what disorder would have ensued if such thefts had been tolerated? Therefore," says Aristotle, "their laws were designed to protect their herds." Peoples whose wealth consisted exclusively of cattle stood in no need of *private ownership of the land*, which first appeared among tillers of the soil, to whom it was wholly essential. Savage peoples that roam the forests knew only fleeting and chance relations between man and woman. *Indissoluble marriage* was introduced by settled and agricultural peoples. "Whilst the husband breaks the virgin soil or works his fields, the wife feeds the fowl, waters the beasts, shears the sheep, works in the house or the poultry yard, or cooks the meals for her husband, children and servants."

* This leads us up to the question of the influence of climate. As the reader will see, the reference is *not to the direct influence* of climate on people's morals, of which Montesquieu spoke. In Helvetius's opinion, that influence is expressed through the medium of the arts, i.e., thanks to the more or less rapid development of the productive forces. These are two quite different points of view.

In this case, therefore, the indissolubility of marriage, far from being burdensome, is of the greatest benefit. Marriage laws in the Catholic countries are designed for this kind of relationship, and are therefore adapted to the interests and calling of *those engaged in agriculture*. On the other hand, they are a burden on people in other callings, particularly the "*high-born*", the "*wealthy*", and the "*idle*", who see in love, not a means of satisfying actual and urgent needs but amusement, a *means against ennui*. The scenes of family morals among the parasitical classes of society which Count *Leo Tolstoy* has depicted in his *Kreutzer Sonata*, as did *Fourier* before him, are in the main reminiscent of what *Helvetius* wrote of marriage and love among the "*idle*".

An agricultural people necessarily differ from a nomadic *in character*. "There are, in every country, a certain number of objects with which all people have to deal while they are being brought up, the identical impression from these objects engendering in citizens that similarity of ideas and sentiments that is called the national spirit or character." It will be readily understood that such "*objects*", whose influence is so decisive in education, are dissimilar with peoples living in conditions so different as, for instance, those engaged in *agriculture* and *hunting*. It is just as obvious that a people's character may change. The French are considered of a *gay* disposition, but they have not always been like that. Thus the Emperor Julian said of the Parisii: "I love them because, their character, like mine, is austere and grave."* But let us consider the Romans. How much strength, virtue, love of liberty and hatred of slavery marked them during the Republic! What weakness, cowardice and baseness when the emperors took the reins! Such baseness was intolerable even to *Tiberius*. Besides, it is not only together with the historical events that a people's character undergoes change: in every period it is not the same even with people in *different callings*. The tastes and habits of warriors differ from those of priests, while the tastes and habits of the "*idle*" are not the same as those of ploughmen and artisans. All this depends on the upbringing.

* As for his French contemporaries, *Helvetius* remarked that the French nation could not be gay because "the misfortunes of the times have forced the princes to impose heavy taxes on the country, so that the peasant class, who alone comprise two-thirds of the nation, live in poverty, and poverty is never gay...." He ridiculed the manner of describing national character: "Nothing in general is more ridiculous and more false than the descriptions given of the character of diverse peoples. Some depict their nation after their own society, making it, in consequence, sad, or gay, or coarse or witty ... Others copy what a thousand writers have written before them; they never examine the change that must of necessity take place in the character of a nation, the modifications that take effect in government and in morals" (*De l'Esprit*, Discours III, chap. XXX).

It is the latter that has subordinated woman to man. That kind of subordination does not operate in the same way in all social estates. Women who are sovereign rulers ("Women like Elizabeth, Catherine II", etc.)* are in no way inferior to men in intellectual gifts. The same is true of "court ladies" who are "distinguished by the same intellect as their husbands". The reason is that, with them, despite all the difference in social status, the two sexes "get an *equally poor upbringing*".

The different notions of beauty depend on the impressions of childhood. "If I especially admire any particular woman, she impresses herself in my recollection as a model of beauty, so that I shall judge of other women according to their greater or lesser resemblance to that image. Hence the variety in tastes." Thus, this is all a matter of habit. But since the habits of any particular people do not always remain the same, their tastes, and their judgements of beauty in objects of art and Nature undergo change too.** Why is it that we do not like medieval novels? "Why is it that during Corneille's lifetime the *genre* of this illustrious poet was appreciated more highly than it is today?" (Of course, the reference is to Helvetius's times.—G.P.) "It is because the troubled time of the League and the Fronde³⁰ came to an end and minds that were still heated by the fires of the sedition were more audacious, more appreciative of the spirit of daring and more given to ambition; that is why the characters Corneille gave his heroes and the projects he made those ambitions conceive were more in keeping with the spirit of that age than of today, when few heroes are to be met, few citizens and few men of ambition, when a happy calm has succeeded the thunderstorms, and the volcanoes of sedition have everywhere died down."

For a better understanding of Helvetius's views on the role of "interest" in the history of mankind, we shall dwell a little longer on the *Robinsonade* that he thought up. His Robinson is represented by "*several families who have retreated to an island*". Their first concern is the erection of cabins and the cultivation of the soil necessary for their subsistence. If the island has more arable land than the first colonists need, they will all be almost equally wealthy; those with the stronger hands and the greater diligence will be the *wealthier*. *Consequently their interests are not very complex* and "therefore" it will suffice for them to have

* Catherine II was able to gull Helvetius, just as she did many others. He always spoke of her in the warmest terms, and was convinced that this Messalina of the North had attacked Poland in the interests of *tolerance*.

** What Helvetius says about our judgement of beauty contains, in some measure, the embryo of Chernyshevsky's ethical theory, but *only* the embryo. In this particular sphere, the analysis given by the Russian writer goes much further and leads to far more important results.

"few laws". If they are obliged to choose a leader, the latter will remain a farmer like all the rest. "The only privilege he may be granted is the choice of a plot of land. *Apart from that, he will have no other power.*"

But, with the increase in the size and the density of the population, no more free land remains for occupation. What is there to be done by one who has no landed property at all? Excluding such things as thievery, robbery, or emigration, the only thing he can do is to find refuge in *new inventions*. A man who is able to invent a new article of consumption or luxury that will find widespread use will make a living by bartering his handiwork for what is produced by the farmers and the artisans. He may possibly found a manufacture, "establishing it in some agreeable site, convenient, and usually on the banks of a river, whose arms stretch far into the interior of the country, thereby facilitating the carriage of his merchandise". Of course, he will not remain the only manufacturer on the island. The *continuing proliferation of the inhabitants* will lead to the invention of other articles of luxury or consumption, and new manufactures will arise. Several of these will form, first a settlement and then a considerable town. "This town will soon contain the most wealthy citizens, because the profits from trade are always immense when traders are as yet few in number and there is still little competition." Wealth gives rise to all kinds of entertainment. The rich land-owners leave their estates so as to spend at least several months a year in town, where they are followed by the poorer folk in the hope of finding subsistence there. In short, our town has become a *capital*.

Thus we now have rich and poor people, employers of labour and ordinary working people. The initial equality has gone. We now have a people made up, under one and the same name, of an "*infinity of different peoples whose interests are more or less contradictory*". *There are as many nations as there are classes*. This process of the formation of classes with differing and even contradictory interests is inevitable in the history of peoples. It takes place more or less rapidly, yet it constantly proceeds and will always do so. "A man who is more hard-working will earn more; the more thrifty saves more and, with the wealth he has already acquired, will acquire yet more wealth. All this is inevitable. Then, there are the heirs, who succeed to large inheritances. There are such merchants that invest large sums in ships, which bring them big gains: that is because, in any kind of commerce, money attracts money. Thus the unequal distribution of money is the inevitable result of its introduction in a State."

But this necessary consequence brings in its train other and no less necessary effects. Those who possess nothing—and their

number will increase constantly as a result of the reproduction of citizens—will compete among themselves more and more in search of some occupation. *They will curtail their needs ever more and more.* In consequence, the inequality keeps growing, and indigence becomes ever more widespread: "...*the poor man sells, the rich man buys*", and the number of proprietors diminishes steadily. *The laws then become more and more severe.* Mild laws are suited to control a people of proprietors. "With the Germans, the Gauls and the Scandinavians, more or less heavy fines were the only punishments inflicted for various offences." It is different when *non-proprietors* form the bulk of the nation. A man who is poor cannot be punished in his possessions; he must be punished in his person; hence *corporal punishment*. The larger the number of the poor, the more thefts, robberies and crimes are committed. *Force* has to be used to counter them. A man who has no property can easily change his place of sojourn, so that a guilty person can easily evade punishment. It therefore becomes necessary to arrest citizens with the observance of fewer formalities, often on the first suspicion. "...Arrest is already an arbitrary punishment, which, soon meted out on the proprietors themselves, replaces liberty by slavery." In its turn, corporal punishment, first practised only against the poor, is then extended to the proprietors. "All citizens come equally under the laws of blood; everything unites to establish them."

The greater number of citizens leads to the appearance of *representative* government, since it is no longer possible for all to gather at some one place to discuss public affairs. While citizens are still almost equal among themselves, their representatives adopt laws in *accordance with the public interest*. But in the measure of the erosion of the initial equality and with the growing complexity of citizens' interests, *the representatives begin to separate their own interests from those of the people they represent; they become more independent of those who have delegated them, and gradually acquire power equal to that of the entire nation.* "Is it not clear that in a vast and populated country the division of the interests of the governed will always furnish governments with the means to encroach upon the authority that man's natural love of power will always make him desire?" Indeed, on the one hand, the proprietors, engrossed in their property, "*cease to be citizens*"; on the other hand, the non-proprietors become secret enemies of the former, and can be armed by a tyrant or tyrants, whenever he or they so wish, for action against the proprietors. "It is then that the mental indolence of those who delegate authority and the active desire for power in those to whom it is delegated presage vast changes in the State. In such times, everything favours ambition in the latter." *Liberty* dies out, and the prospect

of *despotism* grows apace. It is thus that the *multiplication in the number of citizens* leads to the appearance of representative government. The opposedness of their *interests* leads to the rule of arbitrariness.

In a certain passage in his book *De l'Homme*, from which we have, in the main, drawn upon in the foregoing exposition, Helvetius says that, in the conclusions he has drawn, he has based himself *on experience and Xenophon*. These are highly characteristic words. Like Holbach and other "philosophers" of his time, he quite clearly saw the role of the class struggle in history, but in his appraisal of that struggle he did not go much further than "Xenophon", i.e., the *writers of antiquity*. In his opinion, the class struggle engendered *tyranny, mostly tyranny, and nothing but tyranny*. To him, the "*non-proprietors*" were merely a dangerous weapon in the hands of the ambitious rich; they are capable only of selling themselves to anybody "*willing to buy them*", and only of striving to do that. He was referring, not to the proletariat of today, but to that of antiquity, especially of *Rome*. Consequently, he saw social development only as a *closed circle*. "A man grows rich through commerce: he adds an infinity of small properties to his own. Then the number of proprietors, and consequently of those whose interests are most closely linked with the national interest, decreases; on the contrary, the number of people with no possessions and without any interest in public affairs increases. If such men are always ready to serve anyone who will pay them, how can one imagine that those in power will never make use of them to subordinate their fellow-citizens to themselves?"

"Such is the necessary outcome of the excessive multiplication of people in an empire. This is a vicious circle from which no hitherto known governments have been able to escape."

Helvetius was very far from regarding the British with the same distrust as *Holbach*. Incidentally, he found that Great Britain's social and political conditions left much to be desired in many respects, but he esteemed her as the freest and most enlightened country in the world. Yet he did not consider the British freedom, so much to his liking, very reliable. He thought that the difference of interests which had developed so far in Britain would sooner or later lead to its inevitable consequence—the appearance of *despotism*. It must be admitted that Irish history, at least has not excessively refuted him.

Our philosopher's views on the proliferation of humans again go to show how little originality the Malthusian theory contained. We shall not criticise those views here, or Helvetius's views regarding the origin of property and the family. It will be sufficient for us simply to take note of his overall historico-

philosophical point of view.* However, to have done with its characteristic, we must also consider some other consequences of the "proliferation of citizens", or, to put it more correctly, of the constant and inevitable growth of property inequality.

There is nothing more dangerous to society than *people without property*! Nothing is more to the advantage of the employers than such people, and nothing else will better serve their interests. "*The more poor people there are, the less the employers pay them for their labour.*" But the employers are now the real power in a "trading country". The public interest is sacrificed to their "private" interest, which motivates all their actions and is the criterion for their judgements. That is something we see in any society with complex and contrasting interests. It breaks up into small societies, which judge of the virtues, minds and merits of citizens from the angle of their own interests. In the long run, it is the *interests of the mighty* which dominate the nation and come in for the greatest consideration.

We already know that *corruption of morals* sets in universally wherever *private interest* is divorced from the *public interest*. The ever growing inequality in property must therefore *engender and intensify* the corruption of morals. Indeed, that is what takes place. *Money*, which makes for greater inequality, at the same time debases *virtue*. In a country "*where there is no circulation of money*", the nation is the only fair distributor of rewards. "General esteem, that gift of public recognition, can be accorded only to ideas and actions that are useful to the nation; consequently, any citizen sees virtue as a necessity." "In countries where *money circulates*, its possessor can give it to any person or persons who provide him with the greatest enjoyment, and he usually does so. However, such a person or persons do not always command the greatest respect, so that rewards are often given for actions that are "useful only to the wealthy but injurious to society". The rewards given to *vice* create depraved people, while love of money, which stifles the spirit and all patriotic virtue, produces only base natures, tricksters and intriguers. "Love of riches does not extend to all classes of citizens, without inspiring in the ruling party a desire to steal and annoy. From that time on, the construction of a port, the production of armaments, a business venture, or a war asserted to have started for the nation's honour—in short, any pretext to fleece the people is seized

* We shall note, merely in passing, that *Holbach* considered the "proliferation of citizens" from the diametrically opposite stand. To him it meant only the growth of the state's might and wealth. In this he was in agreement with most eighteenth-century writers.

upon. Then all the vices born of cupidity at once obtrude themselves upon the empire, infect all its members in succession, and finally bring about its ruin."

As we have already shown in the essay devoted to him, Holbach, too, considered cupidity the mother of all vices and the ruin of a nation. But in *Holbach* we meet only with *declamations* on the subject, while *Helvetius* tried to penetrate into the laws of social development. Holbach fulminated against "luxury"; Helvetius noted that luxury was merely the outcome of the unequal distribution of wealth. Holbach called upon legislators to combat any proneness to luxury; Helvetius found any such struggle, not only useless but highly damaging to society. In the first place, anti-luxury laws, which could easily be evaded, were too grave an incursion into the right of property, that "*most sacred of rights*"; in the second place, to stamp out luxury, "*it is necessary to abolish money*", and "no prince could harbour such a design, and if he did, no nation, in the present condition of Europe, would lend itself to his desires". Execution of such a plan would mean the complete ruin of the nation.

Luxury exists only where property inequality is very great. In a country with approximately equal property among citizens, *luxury* cannot exist whatever the degree of prosperity they may achieve, or rather luxury will be, not a misfortune but a great social blessing in such a country. But since wealth is distributed most unevenly, the abolition of luxury would mean an end to the production of a multitude of articles, and would consequently *throw a large number of the poor out of work*. The final outcome, therefore would be the direct opposite of the original intention. "The moralists' incensement against luxury springs from their ignorance," Helvetius infers.*

Thus we have here a constant law of social development. From poverty a people rise to wealth, and from wealth arrive at the unequal distribution of wealth, the corruption of morals, luxury and depravity; thence they come to despotism, and from despotism *to ruination*. "The principle of life which, developing in the majestic oak, raises the sapling, spreads its branches, thickens its trunk and makes it reign over the forest, is at the same time the principle of its withering." "Under the existing form of government", the peoples cannot depart from this most dangerous road of development. *To slow down their steps along that road* is even

* That is how he put it in *De l'Homme*. In his book *De l'Esprit*, Helvetius expressed his opinion in vague terms, but there he also intimated that the question of luxury could not be solved as easily as the "moralists" supposed. According to *Diderot*, the passage dealing with luxury was among the finest in the book. Cf. his *Œuvres*, t. I, section 1, the article "Sur le livre *De l'Esprit*".

dangerous to them. Stagnation will lead to incalculable calamities, perhaps to the cessation of life itself.

The number and especially the nature of the textile mills in any country depend on its wealth and the mode of its distribution. If all citizens are well-to-do, they will all wish to be well dressed, which will lead to the appearance of many textile mills producing *neither excessively fine nor excessively coarse* fabrics. If, on the contrary, most of the citizens are poor, then only such enterprises will exist that cater for the needs of the rich class and will produce only opulent, glossy and not very sturdy fabrics. Thus, "under any form of government, all phenomena depend on one another".

The production of *cotton fabrics* is one of the most important branches of present-day industry. Such fabrics are not designed for wealthy consumers. *Thus, Helvetius's view is not in accord with reality.** Nevertheless, it remains true that *under any "government" all phenomena depend on one another*. We have already seen many instances of this, and we shall cite another one.

Their requirements teach people how to cultivate the soil, and it is those requirements that *engender* the arts and the sciences. Again, it is requirements that lead to the latter's stagnation or advance in one direction or another. As soon as considerable inequality of property is created, there arise a multitude of *arts for enjoyment*, designed to entertain the wealthy and dispel their boredom. Interest never ceases from being mankind's great and sole instructor. How could it be otherwise? It should not be forgotten that: "Any comparison of objects among themselves presupposes attention; any attention presupposes effort, and any effort the incentive that spurs it". It is indisputable that the promotion of education is in the interests of any society. But since the rewards for services do not always go to those who serve the common interests but very often to those who serve the interests of the mighty, it will be readily understood why sciences, arts and literature adopt a trend that falls in with the latter's interests. "Why should the sciences and arts not have been bathed in refulgence in a country such as Greece, where they were held in universal and constant veneration?" Why was Italy so rich in orators? Was that due to the influence of her climate, as is asserted by the sapient imbecility of certain academic ped-

* Helvetius knows of societies in which "*money is in circulation*" and others in which it is not. However, to him products always assume the *form of commodities* in both cases. This seems to him just as *natural* as private property. In general, his economic views leave much to be desired. Even the best grounded and most mature of them do not rise above the economic views of David Hume.

ants? An irrefutable reply is to be found in the fact that Rome lost its eloquence and its liberty simultaneously. "Try to discover the reasons for the accusations of barbarism and stupidity constantly made against the peoples of the East by the Greeks, the Romans, and all Europeans, and you will find that the Eastern nations have been considered barbarians and fools by all the educated peoples of Europe, and an object of contempt on the part of free nations and posterity, for the reason that by the word 'intellect' these Oriental peoples have understood only separate and disconnected ideas that have been useful to them, and also because despotism, in almost all of Asia, has banned the study of morality, metaphysics, jurisprudence and politics, in brief, almost all the sciences of interest to mankind." If, as has been said above, all nations in one and the same conditions have the same laws, the same *spirit* and the same predilections, then that should be ascribed to the influence of one and the same interests. It is the combination of interests that determines the development of the human spirit.

The interests of states like both of their private citizens and of human affairs therein, are subject to a thousand transformations. One and the same laws, and even customs and actions become now useful, now detrimental to one and the same people; from this it follows that one and the same laws are now adopted, now rejected, and that one and the same actions are called now *virtuous*, now *vicious*—"a proposition which cannot be rejected otherwise than by allowing that there are actions which at one and the same time are virtuous and detrimental to the state, and that would mean undermining the foundations of all legislation and all society".

Many primitive peoples have a custom of killing their old people. At first glance, nothing could seem more execrable than such a custom, but a little thought will lead one to acknowledge that, in the given conditions, such peoples are forced to consider the killing of old people a virtuous act and that their love for their aged and enfeebled parents must make the young people behave in this way. Savages do not have enough to subsist on, and the old are unable to keep themselves alive by hunting, since that calls for considerable physical endurance. They would therefore either be doomed to a slow and cruel death from starvation or else become a burden on their children or all society which, *because of its poverty*, cannot carry that burden. That is why it is better to cut these sufferings short by the rapid and inescapable killing of parents. "That is the origin of a custom so detestable; that is how a nomadic people, obliged by the need to hunt and the shortage of the necessities of life to spend six months of the year in immense forests, find themselves, so to say,

necessitated to perform such barbarous acts; that is why in such countries patricide is inspired and committed after the same principle of humanity which makes us regard it with horror."

Holbach asked himself why peoples' positive laws so often fall into contradiction with the laws of "*Nature*" and "*justice*". He came out with a simple answer. "These depraved laws," he said, "are a consequence of perverted morals, errors committed by societies, or tyranny, which forces Nature to bow to its authority."* Such an answer did not satisfy *Helvetius*, who considered "*real or at least apparent utility*" that basis of laws and customs which is so naturally sought in "depravity" or "errors". "However stupid one may suppose peoples to be," he said, "it is certain that, guided by their own interests, they could not have adopted, without sufficient motives, the ridiculous customs one finds established among some of them; the strangeness of such customs springs from the diversity of the interests of peoples. *Only those morals and laws are really worthy of hatred which continue to exist after the causes of their introduction have disappeared and which have thus become injurious to society.*" "All customs that bring only transient advantages are like scaffolding, which must be pulled down after the palaces have been erected."

Such is the theory which leaves very little room for *natural law* and *absolute justice*, if it leaves them any room at all. At first, that theory seemed dangerous even to such men as *Diderot*, who considered it a *paradox*. "It is, indeed, the general and particular interest which metamorphoses the idea of the just and the unjust; but its essence is independent of it." But what is that idea's *essence*? What does it *depend* on? *Diderot* said nothing on the matter, merely citing several examples designed to show that justice is absolute. However, these instances are most unconvincing! Will it not *always and everywhere* be praiseworthy *to give water to one who is dying of thirst*? Of course it will, but the most this can prove is that there exist interests common to men everywhere in all times and at all phases of their development. "*Giving water to drink!*" will take us no further than the following argument by *Voltaire*: "Let me ask a Turk, a Parsee or a Malabarian for the money I lent him ... he will acknowledge that it is just that he should pay me ...". Beyond any doubt! But how meagre this absolute morality is, however *honoured* a goddess it may be. As *Locke* said, "those who maintain innate practical principles tell us not what they are...." *Helvetius* could have said the same of those who stand for "*universal morality*".

It is quite obvious that *Helvetius*'s views on the question of

* *Politique naturelle*, London, 1773, I, pp. 37-38.

morality fully coincided only with the principles of materialist sensualism. Incidentally, he was merely repeating and developing the ideas of his teacher Locke, who was also the teacher of Holbach, Diderot and Voltaire. "To the English philosopher, good and evil meant only pleasure or suffering. Therefore, in the *moral* sense, *good and evil* are only that which coincides with or deviates from the law, through which good and evil are brought to us by the will and the authority of the legislator. "Virtue generally approved, ... because profitable ...," Locke said long before Helvetius. "He that will carefully peruse the history of mankind, and look abroad into the several tribes of men, and with indifference survey their actions, will be able to satisfy himself that there is scarce that principle of morality to be named, or rule of virtue to be thought on (those only excepted that are absolutely necessary to hold society together, which commonly, too, are neglected betwixt distinct societies), which is not, somewhere or other, slighted and condemned by the general fashion of whole societies of men, governed by practical opinions and rules of living quite opposite to others." This is exactly what Helvetius tells us, with the only difference that Helvetius knows how to be explicit in the right place. On the basis of "pleasure" and "suffering", he set himself the task of ascribing to *interests* the historical changes in the *legislator's will*. This was perfectly and even too logical for eighteenth-century French "philosophers", whose party was indeed a militant one. In their struggle against the then existent system, they felt the need to be guided by an authority less debatable than men's constantly changing interests. That kind of authority they saw in "*Nature*". The morality and politics that rested on that foundation were in no wise less utilitarian. The *salus populi* was no less the *suprema lex* for them.* But that boon, it was thought at the time, was intimately linked with particular immutable laws that applied equally to all "*creatures endowed with minds and feelings*". So passionately desired, appealed to, and seen as the ideal expression of the bourgeoisie's social and political aspirations, such laws were called *natural laws*. And since the *psychological* source of the ideas that made such laws desirable was unknown, and their logical source had been forgotten, it was asserted, as Diderot did in the article mentioned above, that their *essence was independent of any interest*. This took the philosophers back almost to the selfsame *innate*

* Incidentally, the *populus* whose *salus* was desired did not always mean those who worked and produced. According to Voltaire, the human race could not exist without "a vast number of useful people who possess nothing".... "There is a need for men who have only their hands and good will.... They are free to sell their labour to anyone who will pay them best" (See *Dictionnaire philosophique*, art. "Egalité et Propriété").

ideas which had been in such disrepute since the times of Locke.

"*No innate practical principles*": no idea is impressed by Nature in the mind. That is what was stated by Locke, who added that any sect regards as innate those principles which are in accord with its faith. The philosophers were not out to achieve anything more. For them to have acknowledged the existence of innate ideas would have been tantamount to bowing to the "sect's" "principles" held by the supporters of the past, which they, the philosophers, looked down on. Since Nature *does not impress* anything in our minds, *obsolete* institutions and *obsolete* morality do not owe their existence to Nature. Yet there exists a natural law—a universal and absolute law—which can be discovered by man's *reason, with the aid of experience*. Reason was on the side of the philosophers. Consequently, Nature had to express herself in favour of their aspirations. "*Innate principles*" therefore belonged to the "*past*", which should be destroyed, while *natural law* was the *future* which the innovators were summoning. They did not reject *dogmatism*, but merely extended its boundaries so as to clear the way for the bourgeoisie. Helvetius's views presented a threat to this new kind of dogmatism, which was why they were not accepted by most "philosophers". This, however, did not prevent him from being the most consistent of John Locke's followers.

In no less degree did his views threaten the view, so widely held in the eighteenth century, that the world is governed by *public opinion*. We have already seen that, according to Helvetius, men's opinions are dictated by their interests; we have also seen that the latter do not depend on the human will (let us recall the instance of savages killing their aged because of economic necessity). "*The advance of education*", with the aid of which the philosophers would account for the entire course of history, far from explaining anything, itself stood in need of explanation. *To find that explanation would mean an actual revolution in the realm of "philosophy"*. Helvetius evidently suspected what the consequences of such a revolution would be like. He admitted that, in his study of the human spirit's road of development, he often felt a suspicion that "*everything in Nature occurs and acts of itself*", and that the "*perfection of the arts and sciences is less the work of genius than of time and necessity*". The "*uniform*" progress of the sciences in all countries, he thought, bore out that opinion. "Indeed, if, with all nations, as Hume has observed, *people begin to write well in prose only after they have learnt to do that in verse*, then I see in the constant advance of human reason the effect of a general and obscure cause."* From everything

* *De l'Homme*, section II, chap. XXIII.

the reader has learnt of our philosopher's historical views, this kind of language will no doubt seem highly cautious and indecisive. But it is this very *indeterminate* language that reveals how *vague* were the notions that Helvetius's mind associated with the words *interest*, *needs of people*, whose meaning would seem so clear and so unambiguous.

However strange we may find them, laws and customs are always grounded in "*real or at least imagined utility*". But what is *imagined utility*? What does it depend on, and what does it originate from? Obviously, from public *opinion*. This again brings us back into that *vicious circle* from which we wanted to escape: *opinion depends on interest, and interest on opinion*. What is most noteworthy is that *Helvetius could not but return into that circle*. True, he linked the origins of the most varied and bizarre laws, customs and opinions with society's actual needs, but, in his analysis, he was always confronted with a remainder that none of his metaphysical reagents could break down. *That remainder was, first and foremost, religion*.

All religions spring from man's fear of some invisible force, from his ignorance of the forces of Nature. All false religions resemble one another. Whence such *uniformity*? It is the result of peoples that live in the same conditions always having a similar spirit, similar laws and a similar character. "It is because men who are animated by almost the same interest and having among them almost the same objects for comparison and the same tool, i.e., the same mind for their combination, have of necessity had to arrive at one and the same results ... because, in general, all are pride-ridden ... all look upon man as Heaven's sole favourite, and the main object of its care." This pride leads men to believe all the nonsense the *tricksters* would have them accept. Open the Koran (for the sake of appearance, Helvetius spoke only of "*false religions*"). It can be interpreted in a thousand different ways: it is vague and incomprehensible. But so great is human blindness that, to this day, this book, so full of falsehood and nonsense, this work, in which God is depicted as a tyrant who should be cursed, is still considered sacred. Therefore, the interest that gives rise to religious credulity is one of vanity—an *interest of prejudice*. Instead of explaining to us where human feelings spring from, that interest is itself an expression of those feelings. The "utility" of religion is merely "*imagined utility*". An eighteenth-century philosopher could not possibly have regarded that "*vile*" enemy of *reason* in any other way.

Given vanity and ignorance, those precursors of fear, it can readily be understood with what means the ministers of religion build up and preserve their prestige. "In any religion, the prime aim the priests set themselves is to blunt man's curiosity and to turn

away from his eye the examination of any dogma whose absurdity is too obvious to escape his attention.

"To attain that, it was necessary to flatter human passions; to perpetuate people's blindness, it was necessary for them to desire to be blind and be interested in being so. Nothing is easier for the bonze", etc. We see, in the first place, that religious dogmata and rites were deliberately invented by a few cunning, avaricious and bold swindlers; we see, in the second place, that the peoples' *interest*, which should have explained to us at least the amazing success of such swindlers, is often merely the "imagined" interest of blind people who wish to remain blind. This is obviously no actual interest, no "*need*" that engenders all arts and sciences.

Wherever Helvetius set forth his views on history, he was constantly vacillating, without realising it, between these two diametrically opposite interpretations of *interest*. That was why he was unable to cope with the theory that the world is governed by public *opinion*. Now he tells us that people owe their intellect to the condition they find themselves in; then he finds it crystal clear that people owe their condition exclusively to their intellect. Now he tells us that *hunger* is the source of many arts, and that *habitual needs* are always inventive, i.e., that any more or less important invention is merely the integral of infinitely small inventions; then he assures us, in his polemic with Rousseau, that the art of agriculture "*supposes* the invention of the ploughshare, the plough, smithery, and consequently an infinite multitude of skills in mining, the art of furnace-building, mechanics and hydraulics". Thus, this time it is the *spirit*, science, that is the source of inventions, while in the ultimate analysis, mankind's progress is determined by "*public opinion*". Now Helvetius shows us how a people's laws, customs and tastes derive from its "condition", i.e., from the "arts", from the productive forces at its disposal, and from the economic relations that arise on their basis; then he declares that "it is on the perfection of laws that civic virtues depend, and on human reason that the perfection of those laws depends". Now he depicts arbitrary authority as the inevitable consequence of constantly growing inequality in the distribution of wealth; then he arrives at the following conclusion: "Despotism, that horrible bane of mankind, is most frequently the result of a nation's stupidity. Any people begins by being free. What cause can its loss of liberty be attributed to? Its ignorance, its foolish trust in the ambitious. The latter and the people are like the little girl and the lion in the well-known fable. As soon as she has persuaded the animal to let its claws be clipped and its teeth filed, she turns it over to the mastiffs." Although Helvetius set himself the task of ascribing interest to history, considering

it "people's sole motivation", he returned to "*public opinion*" which, by endowing objects with greater or lesser interest, ultimately becomes the absolute ruler of the world. "Imagined interest" was the submerged rock that wrecked his truly tremendous attempt to advance a materialist explanation of human development. This problem, both in history and morality, proved unsolvable *from the metaphysical point of view*.

In just the same way as *imagined interest* so often took the place of the *actual interest* Helvetius really wished to deal with, the same fate, as we can see, befell *public interest*, which yielded place to the interest of "the mighty of this world". There can be no doubt that, in any society that is divided into classes, the interest of the mighty of this world has always been dominant. But how did Helvetius explain this indisputable fact? Sometimes he spoke of *force*, but most frequently sought refuge in "public opinion", realising that force did not explain anything, since in many, if not all, cases it resided in the oppressed. It is the stupidity of nations that makes them obey tyrants, the "idle rich", those who think only of themselves. Though he was one of the most brilliant representatives of French bourgeoisie at the time of its efflorescence, he did not suspect that, in the historical life of each class of the "mighty of this world", there comes a time when its "*private*" interest coincides with that of a progressive movement, and thereby of *all society*. Helvetius was too much of a metaphysician to discern this dialectic of interests. Though he repeated that any law, no matter how strange it might seem, was or had been based on some actual interest of society, he saw in the *Middle Ages* nothing but a time when *people had turned into beasts, just like Nebuchadnezzar*; feudal laws seemed to him "*the height of absurdity*".*

The discovery of useful arts is brought about by actual needs. Once created and used, any art engenders—with greater or lesser success—new "arts", that depending on the production relations in the society in which it has appeared. It was only momentarily that Helvetius's attention was attracted by this phenomenon of "arts" which arise from "actual" needs and engender new needs which are no less *actual* and which engender no less *useful* arts. He was too hasty in going over to the "*pleasurable arts*" designed to entertain the wealthy and dispel their boredom. "How many arts would have been unknown to us were it not for Love!" he exclaimed. That may have been so! But how many arts would have remained unknown without the capitalist production of essential articles!

* Cf. his *Pensées et réflexions*, in Vol. III of his *Œuvres complètes*, Paris 1818, p. 314.

What is meant by an *actual* need? To our philosopher, this meant primarily a *physiological* need. But to satisfy their physiological needs people must produce certain articles; the *process of that production* must give rise to new *needs*, just as actual as the preceding but whose nature is no longer *physiological*, but *economic*, since such needs spring from the development of production and *mutual relations entered into by people in the process of production*. Helvetius mentioned some of these economic needs, but *only* several: most of them *escaped* his notice. That was why, to him, a most powerful factor of society's historical development was the *multiplication of citizens*, i.e., the increase in the number of stomachs that had to be filled and the number of bodies that had to be clothed, etc. The multiplication of citizens meant the growth of the aggregate total of *physiological needs*. Helvetius did not want to take into consideration that, in its turn, the "multiplication" of citizens depends on society's economic condition, although he did make several fairly clear pronouncements on the matter. However, he was far from sharing the clear and precise views on this matter held by his contemporary Sir James Steuart, who, in his *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* (London, 1767), ascribed the "multiplication of citizens" to "*moral*", i.e., *social*, causes, and already understood that the population law characteristic of any particular *society* changes together with *the mode of production* predominant in that society in a given *period*. Incidentally, Helvetius's views did not contain such platitudes as Malthus's.

Everything in Nature occurs and acts of itself: that is the dialectical point of view. Helvetius merely *sensed* that this point of view was the most productive and correct in science. The reason for the "uniform" progress of the human spirit remained "*unclear*" to him. He very often stopped giving it thought, appealing to it only when the need arose. "In morality as in the realm of the physical," he said, "it is only the great that strikes us. One always supposes that great effects spring from great causes. One expects heavenly signs to announce the downfall of empires or revolutions in them. Yet how many crusades have been launched or stopped, how many revolutions carried out or prevented, how many wars begun or ended by the intrigues of some priest, some woman, or some minister! It is only the absence of memoirs or underground anecdotes that prevents the Duchess of Marlborough's glove from being found everywhere."³¹ This *point of view* is the direct contrary of that according to which "*everything occurs and acts of itself*".

"The principle of life which, developing in the majestic oak, raises the sapling, spreads its branches, thickens its trunk and makes it reign over the forest, is at the same time the principle

of its withering." Here Helvetius is again speaking as a dialectician who understands the absurdity of an abstract and absolute *contraposition of the useful and the harmful*. Here he again recalls that any process of evolution has its immanent and immutable laws. Proceeding from this standpoint, he arrives at the conclusion that no "*specific means*" exists against inequality of "property", an inequality which, after a long existence, must inevitably destroy any society. But this is not *his final conclusion*. It is only under the "*actually existing form of government*" that a *specific means* against this evil has no existence. Under a more rational form, very much could be undertaken against it. What, then, is that beneficent form of government? It is one that will be discovered by *reason based on experience*. Philosophy can very well solve "*the problem of perfect and durable legislation*" which, once adopted by any nation, can become a source of its *happiness*. A perfect legislation will not do away with inequality of property, but it will prevent the appearance of its harmful consequences. In the capacity of a "philosopher", Helvetius sets forth for us, in the form of a "*moral catechesis*", the "precepts and principles of justice", the "utility and truth"* of which are proved to us by *day-by-day experience* and which should serve as the basis of a "perfect" legislation. Moreover, he supplements his catechesis with several other features of such a legislation.

The book *De l'Esprit* frightened the adherents of *natural law*, who saw in the author an opponent to that law. Their fears were only half justified, for Helvetius was only a stray sheep that would sooner or later return to the fold. He who, it might have seemed, had left no room for natural law, he who regarded as reasonable laws and customs that appeared most absurd, wound up by stating that the closer the peoples approached in their institutions to *natural law*, the greater the progress of reason in them. Thus, he reformed and returned to the fold of the *philosophical church*. Faith, a sacred and redeeming faith in "*Reason*", had emerged victorious over any other point of view. "The time has come," he exclaimed, "for those deaf to all theological contradictions to give ear only to the teachings of wisdom! We have awakened ... from our slumbers; the night of ignorance has passed; the day of science has arrived."

Let us give ear to the voice of "reason" and turn the pages of the "*moral catechesis*" of its interpreter:

"*Question*: What makes this right of property so sacred, and for what reason, under the name of "Term", has it been turned into a God almost everywhere?³²

* *De l'Homme*, section X, chap. VII.

“Answer: It is because the preservation of property is the moral God of Empires; it is that which maintains domestic peace and makes equity reign; it is because people have united only to ensure their property; it is because justice, which in itself comprises almost all the virtues, consists in rendering to each man that which belongs to him, thereby being reduced to the upholding of that right of property; finally, because the diverse laws have never been anything but various means of ensuring citizens that right”.

* * *

“Question: Are there not, among the diverse laws, such which can be given the name of natural laws?

“Answer: As I have already said, these are such that concern property and have become established in almost all civilised nations and societies because societies can be formed only on the basis of such laws.”

* * *

“Question: What should a prince do, supposing he wished to perfect the science of laws?

“Answer: He should encourage people gifted in the study of that science, and charge them with the solution of various problems therein.

“Question: What would happen then?

“Answer: Laws that are changeable and still imperfect would cease from being so, and would become stable and sacred.”

* * *

But enough! With Helvetius, as with Holbach and all eighteenth-century “philosophers”, the utopia of “perfect legislation” is merely a bourgeois utopia. Several features peculiar to our author do not change its essence. We shall cite only several of these, so as to complete our picture of a man whose moral physiognomy has so often been distorted by the ideologists of an ungrateful bourgeoisie.

In his perfect society, Helvetius does not make the workers have such a long working day as is the practice with us. “Wise laws,” he said, “could no doubt create a marvel of universal happiness. If all citizens possess some property, if they all enjoy a certain competence, and, *by working seven or eight hours*, abundantly provide for their needs and those of their families, they will be as happy as can be... .” “If work is generally regarded as an evil, it is because, in most States, one can acquire necessities only

by excessive labour, and because the idea of work is always associated with the idea of drudgery."* *Fourier's* idea of *attractive work* was merely a development of this idea of Helvetius, just as the eight-hour working day is merely the proletariat's solution of a problem raised by this *bourgeois* philosopher, the only difference being that the proletariat will not stop at that in its advance towards "*happiness*".

Helvetius stood for *upbringing by society*. In his opinion, there were many reasons for it always to be given preference over private instruction. He quoted only one of these, which will be quite sufficient: it is only upbringing by society that rears patriots because it alone is able to bind together, in the minds of citizens, the idea of personal happiness with that of the nation. This is another idea of this *bourgeois* philosopher's to be tackled by *the proletariat*, which will develop it in keeping with the needs of the time.

But Helvetius himself, as we know, did not expect anything of the proletariat. To whom, then, did he entrust the implementation of his plan? Of course, to some *wise prince*. But as man is only a product of his environment, and as, further, the environment of princes is very depraved, what reasonable grounds have we to expect the appearance of a *sage on the throne*? Our philosopher was well aware of the difficulty of replying to this question. Finding it hard to find an answer, he resorted to the aid of the *probability* theory.

"If, as the sages say, all possibilities are given effect within a more or less extended period of time, why should we despair of mankind's future happiness? Who can prove that the truths established above will always be useless to it? It is rare but necessary that a given time will produce a Penn (!) or a Manco-Capac" (!) "to give laws to emerging societies. But supposing ... that, jealous for new glory, such a man would wish to perpetuate his name in posterity, under the title of a friend of mankind, and that, in consequence, is more occupied with drawing up his laws and with the happiness of the peoples than with enlarging his power, this man would wish to make men happy, and not slaves. Then, no doubt ... he would perceive, in the principles I have just set forth, the embryo of a new legislation, one more in conformity with the happiness of mankind."**

Inasmuch as the "philosophers" engaged in the question of the influence of the environment on the individual, they reduced its operation to the actions of "government". Helvetius did not act as hastily as the others. There was a time when he saw and clearly

* *De l'Homme*, section VIII, chap. I, II.

** *ibid.*, chap. XXVI.

stated that a government is, in its turn, merely a product of the social environment; he was able, with greater or lesser success, to deduce the *civil, criminal and public laws* of his hypothetical island from its *economic condition*. But as soon as he went over to the study of the development of "education", i.e., science and literature, he began, as the reader will remember from the preceding exposition, to notice only the influence of government. However, the idea of the irresistible influence of government is a kind of *blind alley* from which escape is possible only through a miracle, i.e., a government which suddenly decides to heal all the ills created by itself or by preceding governments. Helvetius also appealed to that miracle and, to revitalise his own faith and that of his readers, he sought salvation in a seemingly boundless field—that of "*possibilities*".

But theory does not as yet create faith, least of all a theory providing grounds for as little confidence as does the theory of possibilities that take effect over a longer or shorter period. Thus, Helvetius, at least in respect of *France*, remained a *complete non-believer*. "My country," he wrote in the Preface to his book *De l'Homme*, "has ultimately come under the yoke of despotism. From now on, she will produce no more celebrated writers ... no more will the name of Frenchman be made famous by this people. Today, this degraded nation is the scorn of Europe. No salutary crisis will return it its liberty. ... It is said that happiness, like the sciences, wanders about the world. It is now heading northwards: great princes are calling genius thither, and genius invites happiness.... It is to such sovereigns that I dedicate this work."³³ It seems to us that this mistrust, which found some small counterpoise in hopes placed in Northern sovereigns, enabled him to take his analysis of moral and social phenomena farther than other "philosophers" did. Like Voltaire, Holbach was an indefatigable propagandist; he published a large number of books in which he, in essence, always harped on the same theme. Helvetius wrote only one book *De l'Esprit*; the other, *De l'Homme*, is merely a lengthy commentary to it. The author never wanted to have it published in his lifetime. "He who wishes to learn the true principles of morality," he wrote, "must rise to the principle of physical sensitivity, and seek, in the needs of hunger, thirst and the like, for the cause that makes men, who have already multiplied, till the soil, join together in society, and enter into conventions whose observance or infraction makes men just or unjust." Thus, he undertook his analysis with the purpose of discovering the *true principles of morality* and, at the same time, of *politics*. In advancing the principle of "sensory impressions", he showed that he was the most consistent and logical of all eighteenth-century materialists. By seeking in "the needs of hunger, thirst

and the like" the causes of mankind's historical advance, he set himself the task of finding a materialist explanation of that advance. From afar, he saw many truths of far more value than his plan of a perfect legislation or his immutable and absolute "*great truths*", which he dedicated to the sovereigns of the "North". He understood that some "common cause" must exist in human development, but he did not and could not know that cause since he did not possess enough facts or the necessary method. That cause remained "*hidden*" and "*unclear*" to him but it did not make him inconsolable, for the utopian in him comforted the philosopher. The main purpose had been achieved: the principles of "*excellent*" legislation had been drawn up.

Two examples will suffice to show how, in drawing up his utopian plans, Helvetius sometimes used the principle of sensory impressions.

"I am not inimical to theatrical performances," he said, "and, in this respect, I do not accept Rousseau's advice. Such performances no doubt provide pleasure. But there is no pleasure which, in the hands of a wise government, could not become a principle conducive to virtue if the latter sees recompense in that pleasure."*

And here is what he said in defence of *divorce*: "If it is true that a desire for change is, as they say, inherent in human nature, the possibility of such change could be established as a reward for merit. One could then try, by such means, to make warriors more brave, judges more just, workers more industrious and talented people more diligent." *Divorce as a reward for "virtue"*! What could be more comical?

We know that if the principles of perfect legislation are ever given effect, then "unstable and as yet imperfect laws will cease from being such and will become immutable". Thus, society will be in a state of *rest*. What will be the consequences of such a condition? "Let us imagine that, in each branch of science or art, men will be able to compare among themselves all known objects and facts, and will have finally discovered all the latter's various relations. Since men will have no more new combinations to make, then what is known as the mind will no longer exist. Then everything will turn into science, and the human mind will be forced into repose until the discovery of unknown facts permits it again to compare and combine them in just the same way as an exhausted mine is allowed to rest until new veins are formed."**

* *De l'Homme*, section I, chap. X, note.

** *De l'Homme*, section II, chap. XV. Here Helvetius means by *spirit* "a complex of new ideas", and by *science* the acquisition of ideas already known to mankind.

Thus, this *repose* and this *exhaustion* of the human spirit should—at least in the realm of social relations—inevitably bring in its train the fulfilment of Helvetius's moral and political principles. Thus, *stagnation* was the ideal of this philosopher, who was so fanatical an adherent of progress! *Metaphysical materialism was only half-revolutionary*. To him, revolution was only a means (*and then only in view of the absence of peaceful means*) of reaching a *safe* and *calm* heaven once and for all.... Within his breast there lived—alas!—two spirits, just as in Faust and in the bourgeoisie, the eighteenth-century materialists being the latter's most progressive representatives.

III MARX

The eighteenth-century materialists thought that they had done with idealism. The old metaphysics was dead and buried, and Reason wished to hear no more of it. However, things soon took a new turn: already in the epoch of the "philosophers", a revival of speculative philosophy began in Germany, and during the first four decades of the current nineteenth century a deaf ear was turned to materialism, which was itself now considered dead and buried. To the entire world of philosophy and literature, the materialist doctrine seemed "drab", "gloomy" and "deadening," as it did to Goethe: "it made people shudder as though it were a spectre".* For its part the speculative philosophy thought that its rival had been overcome for all time.

It must be acknowledged that speculative philosophy possessed a considerable advantage over materialism. It made a study of things in their *development*, their *inception* and *destruction*. However, to examine things from this latter point of view meant eschewing a mode of examination so characteristic of the Enlighteners, which, by eliminating from phenomena every internal movement of life, turned them into fossils whose nature and nexus were incomprehensible. Hegel, that nineteenth-century titan of idealism, never ceased from waging the struggle against this mode of examination; to him, it was "not free and objective thinking, since it did not allow the object to freely determine itself from within itself but presupposed it as being ready".** The restored idealist philosophy lauded a method that was the diametrical opposite—the *dialectical*—and used it with amazing success. Since we have had frequent occasion to mention this method, and since we shall have further to deal with it, it may be useful to describe it in the words of Hegel himself, that master of idealist dialectics.

* See Book XI of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in which Goethe describes his impression of *Système de la Nature*.

** *Encyklopädie* herausgegeben von L.v. Henning, § 31.

"Dialectic," he says, "is usually regarded as an external skill which arbitrarily brings confusion into certain notions and creates in them merely an *appearance of contradictions*, so that it is not these definitions that are illusory, but this appearance, whereas the definitions of the intellect, on the contrary, are true. Indeed, dialectic is often nothing else but a subjective play which arbitrarily advances now proofs and now denials of a definite proposition—a reasoning in which content is absent and whose emptiness is concealed behind this ingenuity, which creates that kind of reasoning. However, in its real character, dialectic is the genuine own nature of the definitions of the intellect, of things, and of the finite in general. Reflection is in itself a movement of thought which transcends isolated definiteness and correlates it with others, thanks to which this definiteness is brought into a certain connection, but, besides that, preserves its former isolated significance. Dialectic is, on the contrary, an immanent transition of one definition into another, in which it is revealed that these definitions of the intellect are one-sided and limited, i.e., contain a negation of themselves. *Everything finite is doomed to self-destruction*. Consequently, dialectic is the motive soul of any scientific advance of thought and is a principle which alone brings into the content of science an *immanent connection and necessity*."

Everything that surrounds us can serve as an instance of dialectic. "A planet now stands in this place, but in itself tends to be in another place, giving effect to its Otherness by its being in motion.... As for the presence of dialectic in the spiritual world, and in particular, in the legal and moral domains, it should here merely be recalled that, according to the experience of all men, any state of affairs or action carried to extremes changes into its opposite; this dialectic, we shall note in passing, is recognised in many proverbs. Thus, there is a proverb that says: *Summum jus, summa injuria*, which means that an abstract right carried to extremes changes into injustice"..., etc.*

The French materialists' metaphysical method refers to the dialectical method of German idealism in the same way as elementary mathematics stands to higher mathematics. In the former, the notions are strictly limited and separated from one another as by an "abyss": a polygon is a polygon and nothing else; a circle is a circle and nothing else. Already in planimetry, however, we are obliged to use what is known as the *method of limits*, which rocks our worthy and immovable notions and strangely brings them close to one another. How is it proved that the area of a circle is equal to the product of the perimeter and half of the

* *ibid.*, §81 and Supplement.

radius? It is said that the difference between the area of a regular polygon inscribed in a circle and the area of that circle can be made an arbitrarily small magnitude, given the condition that we take a sufficiently large number of its sides. If we indicate the area, perimeter and diagonal of a regular polygon, inscribed in a circle, by means of a , p , and r , respectively, then we get that $a = p \cdot \frac{1}{2}r$; here a and $p \cdot \frac{1}{2}r$ are magnitudes that change together with the number of sides but always remain equal among themselves; therefore their *limits* will also be equal. If we denote by means of A , C and R the area, circumference and radius of a circle respectively then A is the limit of a , C is the limit of p , and R is the limit of r ; therefore $A = C \cdot \frac{1}{2}R$. Thus, a *polygon turns* into a circle; it is thus that the circle is considered *in the process of its becoming*. This is already a remarkable upheaval in mathematical notions, and it is this upheaval that the higher analysis takes as its *points of departure*. Differential calculus deals with *infinitesimal* magnitudes, or, as Hegel puts it, "it has to do with magnitudes which *are in the process of disappearing*—neither *before* their disappearance, for then they are finite magnitudes, not *after*, for then they are nothing."*

However strange and paradoxical this device may seem, it renders mathematics incalculable services, thereby proving that it is the diametrical opposite of the *absurdity* it might be taken for at first. The eighteenth-century "philosophers" had a high appreciation of its advantages, and they engaged a great deal in the higher analysis. But these very people, who, like *Condorcet*, for instance, made excellent use of this weapon in their calculations, would have been greatly surprised to learn that this dialectical device should be applied in the study of *all the phenomena science deals with, irrespective of the sphere they pertain to*. They would have replied that *human nature* is at least just as firm and eternal as the rights and duties of people and citizens, which derive from that nature. The German idealists held a different view. Hegel affirmed that "*there is nothing that is not a condition... between Being and Nothingness*".

As long as, in the field of *geology*, there held sway the theory of cataclysms, sudden upheavals, which with one hammer blow changed the surface of the globe and destroyed the old species of animals and plants to make room for new ones, the mode of thinking was metaphysical. But when this theory was rejected, yielding place to the idea of the slow development of the Earth's crust under the lengthy influence of the same forces that also operate in our days, then the *dialectical* standpoint was taken up.

* *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Nürnberg, 1812, I. Band, I. Buch. S. 42.

As long as it was thought in *biology* that species are *immutable*, the mode of thinking was *metaphysical*. This was the view held by the French materialists, who were constantly returning to it even when trying to give it up. Present-day biology has shed this view once and for all. The theory that bears the name of Darwin is a *dialectical* theory in its essence.

At this point, the following remark must be made. However healthy the reaction against the old metaphysical theories in natural science was, it created, in its turn, much regrettable muddled thinking. There appeared a trend towards interpreting new theories in the sense of the old expression: *natura non facit saltum*, this leading to another extreme: attention was now being paid only to the process of *gradual quantitative change* in a given phenomenon; its going over into another phenomenon remained quite incomprehensible. *This was the old metaphysics but placed on its head*. In just the same old way, phenomena remained separated from one another by an *unbridgeable gulf*. So firmly is this metaphysics established in the minds of the present-day evolutionists that there are now a number of "*sociologists*" who reveal a total lack of understanding whenever their researches come up against *revolution*. As they see it, *revolution* is incompatible with *evolution*: *historia non facit saltum*. They are not in the least disturbed if, despite this historical wisdom, revolutions, and even great ones, take place. They hold fast to their theory: so much the worse for revolutions, which disturb its peacefulness; they are considered "*maladies*". *Dialectical* idealism had already condemned this appalling confusion of ideas, and fought against it. Here is what Hegel says in respect of the above-mentioned expression: "It is said *natura non facit saltum*; and ordinary imagination, when it has to conceive a *becoming* or *passing away*, thinks it has conceived them when it imagines them as a *gradual emergence* or disappearance". However, dialectic most convincingly shows that "changes of Being are, in general, not only a transition of one quantity into another but also a transition from the qualitative into the quantitative and conversely: a process of becoming something else which *breaks off gradualness* and is qualitatively something else as against the preceding being. Water, on being cooled, does not become hard little by little, gradually reaching the consistency of ice after having passed through the consistency of a paste, but is suddenly hard; when it has already attained freezing-point, it may, if standing still, be wholly liquid, and a slight shake brings it into the condition of hardness.

"The notion of the gradualness of becoming is based upon the idea that that which becomes is already, sensibly or otherwise, actually there, and is imperceptible only on account of its small-

ness; the gradualness of vanishing is based on the idea that Not-being or the Other which is assuming its place is equally there, only is not yet noticeable; there, not in the sense that the Other is contained in *itself* in the Other which is there, but that it is there as Determinate Being, only unnoticeable.”*

Thus:

1) *all that is finite is such that cancels itself, is transmuted into its opposite.* This transition is effected with the aid of the nature inherent in every phenomenon, which contains forces that engender its opposite.

2) The gradual *quantitative* changes in a given content ultimately turn into *qualitative* distinctions. The features of that conversion are those of a *leap, a break in the gradualness*. It is highly erroneous to think that Nature or history makes no leaps.

Such are the characteristic features of the dialectical world-outlook, which it would be useful to note here.

In its application to social phenomena (and we are dealing with them alone), the dialectical method has created a veritable revolution. It will be no exaggeration to say that to it we owe an understanding of human history as a *law-governed process*. The materialist “philosophers” saw in the history of making merely the *conscious* acts of more or less wise and virtuous people, but in the main of not very wise and quite unvirtuous people. Dialectical idealism surmised the existence of *necessity* where a first glance reveals merely the *unordered play of chance*, merely an endless struggle between individual passions and purposes. Even Helvetius, who, with his “*assumption*” that in history, just as in Nature, everything “*occurs and acts of itself*” (these are his own words), drew closer to the dialectical point of view; even he accounted for historical events only through the qualities of *individuals* in possession of political power. In his opinion, Montesquieu was in error when, in his book *Sur la grandeur et la décadence des Romains*, he *ignored the fortunate play of circumstances that had been of service to Rome*. He said that Montesquieu “fell into the shortcoming, all too common with reasoners, of wishing to ascribe Reason to everything, while at the same time falling into the error of all armchair scholars who, forgetful of mankind, ascribe with excessive ease constant views and uniform principles to all bodies” (Helvetius is speaking here of political “bodies” such as the Roman Senate) “while very often it is an individual who conducts to his own liking the grave assemblies called Senates”.**

* *Logik*, I. Band, I. Buch, S. 313.

** Cf. *Pensées et réflexions d'Helvetius*, in Vol. III of his *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1818, p. 307.

How different from this is the theory of Schelling, who asserts that, in history, *freedom* (i.e., *the conscious acts of people*) turns into necessity, while necessity turns into freedom. Schelling regards the following question as *the most important problem of philosophy*: "what is it that, parallel with our acting perfectly freely, i.e., with full consciousness, leads to something arising in us in the form of something conscious, which has never existed in our minds and could never have arisen if our freedom were granted full play?"*

To Hegel, "world history is progress in the consciousness of freedom, a progress we have to cognise in its necessity". Like Schelling he thinks that "in world history, thanks to the acts of men in general, results are also obtained which are somewhat different from those which they have striven for and achieved, from results they have immediate knowledge of, and wish; they are out to ensure that their interests are met, but, thanks to that, something further is realised, something that is latent in them, but is not consciously realised and formed no part of their intention".**

It is clear that, from this point of view, it is not men's "opinions" that "govern the world", and it is not in them that one should seek for a key to historical events. In its development, "public opinion" obeys laws which mould it with the same necessity that determines the movement of celestial bodies. It was thus that a solution was found for the antinomy that the "philosophers" were constantly coming up against:

1) *Public opinion governs the world; it determines the relations among members of society; it creates the social environment.*

2) *Man is a product of the social environment; his opinions are determined by the features of that environment.****

Everything depends on legislation, the "philosophers" reiterated, firmly convinced that any people's mores depend on its legislation. On the other hand, they reiterated just as often that it was corrupt morals that led to the downfall of the civilisation of antiquity. What we have here is just another *antinomy*: 1) legislation creates morals; 2) morals create legislation. Such antinomies comprised, so to say, both the essence and the misfortune of eighteenth-century philosophical thought, which was incapable of solving them, getting rid of them, or comprehending the causes of the horrible muddle in which it found itself again and again.

* *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*, Tübingen, 1800, S. 426 und f.

** *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 9. Bd. der Hegelschen Werke, herausgegeben von E. Gans, S. 22, 30. Cf. Schelling, op. cit., S. 424.

*** Cf. our essay on Holbach.

The *metaphysician* considers and studies things one after another and in their isolation from one another. When he feels the need to provide an overall picture, he examines things in their *interaction*; at this point he comes to a halt, and does not, and cannot, go any further, since to him things remain separated from one another by a gulf, and since he has no conception of their development to explain either their origins or the relations existing between them.

Dialectical idealism crosses these borders, which the metaphysicians find impassable. It regards both aspects of the relation of interaction, not as "directly given" but as "moments of something tertiary and higher, which is Notion". Thus, Hegel examines the morals and state structure of Sparta. "If, for example," he says, "we consider the *mores* of the Spartan people as the result of their state structure and, conversely, their state structure as the result of their *mores*, this mode of examination may be correct, yet it does not give final satisfaction, because in fact we have understood neither the state structure nor the *mores* of this people. That is possible only if it is realised that these two aspects, and also all the other aspects revealed by the life and history of the Spartan people, have a Notion as their foundation."*

The French philosophers harboured only *contempt*, or rather only *hatred*, for the *Middle Ages*. Helvetius looked upon feudalism as the "*height of absurdity*". Though Hegel was very far from any romantic idealisation of the *mores* and institutions of medieval times, he regarded the latter as a necessary element in mankind's development. *Moreover*, he already saw that the internal contradictions of medieval social life had given rise to present-day society.

The French philosophers saw in religion merely a mass of superstitions springing from mankind's own stupidity and the fraud practised by the priests and the prophets. They could only *wage a struggle* against religion. However useful this kind of work was for their times, it made not the least contribution to the scientific study of religion. That study *was prepared* by dialectical materialism. It will suffice merely to compare *Strauss's Das Leben Jesu* with *Holbach's Critical History of Jesus Christ* to see the vast step forward made in the philosophy of religion under the beneficial influence of Hegel's dialectical method.**

* *Encyklopädie*, I. Teil, § 156, Zusatz.

** Incidentally, instead of reading Holbach's book, the German reader might turn the pages of *Leben Jesu* (H. E. Paulus, Heidelberg, 1828), which sets forth the same point of view. Only the German Enlightener tries to laud that which the French philosopher fought against so passionately. Paulus sees a miracle of goodness and wisdom in a person who produced on Holbach the impression of an ignorant and depraved idler.

When the "philosophers" made a study of the history of philosophy they did so to cull therein arguments supporting their views, or else to destroy the systems of their idealistic predecessors. Hegel did not dispute his precursors' systems, which he considered various stages in the development of a "*single philosophy*". Any particular philosophy is a daughter of its times; "the most recent philosophy is the outcome of all preceding philosophies and must therefore contain the principles of all of them; therefore, if only it is a philosophy, it is the most developed, richest and most concrete philosophy".*

A "perfect legislation" was one of the favourite subjects studied by the philosophers, each of whom had his own utopia on this score. Dialectical idealism cold-shouldered such studies. "A State," says Hegel, "is an individual totality, of which you cannot take any particular side, even a supremely important one, such as its political constitution; and deliberate and decide on it in isolation.... One must understand the spirit of a people from which everything in the State springs; it develops of itself, and in its development one can distinguish certain periods, for each of which a certain constitution is necessary, which is not a matter of choice but is in keeping with the spirit of the times.... Second and further: it is not only the constitution that is determined by the spirit of a people, but that spirit of a people is a link in the course of the development of the World Spirit, in which individual constitutions occur."**

In a word, dialectical idealism regarded the Universe as a single whole "*developing from its own Notion*". A cognition of that integrity and a revelation of the process of its development—such was the task that philosophy set itself—a noble, majestic and admirable task! A philosophy that set itself such a task could not seem "drab" or "deadening" to anybody. Quite the reverse: it evoked universal admiration by the fullness of its life, the irresistible force of its movement, and the beauty of its brilliant colours. Yet the noble attempt launched by idealistic dialectical philosophy remained uncompleted; it did not and could not complete it. After rendering the human spirit invaluable services, German idealism fell into decline in order, as it were, to provide fresh proof for its own theory, and show from its own example that "*all that is finite is such that cancels itself, is transmuted into its opposite*". Ten years after Hegel's death, *materialism* again appeared on the arena of philosophical development, and to this day has not ceased from scoring victories over its old opponent.

* *Encyklopädie*, § 13.

** *Philosophie der Geschichte*, S. 50-51.

What is that *Notion*, that Absolute Idea, that World Spirit of which German speculative philosophy kept on speaking? Is there any means of cognising that mysterious being which, it was thought, gives movement and life to everything?

Indeed, there exists such a means, and a very simple one at that; only it calls for careful examination. If that is given, a most wonderful transformation takes place. That *Absolute Idea*, which is so irresistible in its movement, so luscious and fruitful, mother to everything that has been, is and will be in future centuries, loses all lustre, becomes immovable, proves a *pure abstraction* and, very far from being able to explain anything, humbly asks for the least explanation of itself. *Sic transit gloria ... ideae*.

The Absolute Idea, with all its immanent laws, is merely a personification of the *process of our own thinking*. Anyone who appeals to that Idea for an explanation of the phenomenon of Nature or social evolution abandons the firm soil of facts and enters the *realm of shadows*. That is exactly what happened to the German idealists.

In a book that came out in Frankfort on the Main in 1845 and was written by two men whose names won fame in the second half of the nineteenth century, we find a splendid exposure of the "*mystery of speculative constructions*".

"If from real apples, pears, strawberries and almonds I form the general idea '*Fruit*', if I go further and *imagine* that my abstract idea '*Fruit*', derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the *true* essence of the pear, the apple, etc., then—in the *language of speculative philosophy*—I am declaring that '*Fruit*' is the '*Substance*' of the pear, the apple, the almond, etc. I am saying, therefore, that to be a pear is not essential to the pear, that to be an apple is not essential to the apple; that what is essential to these things is not their real existence, perceptible to the senses, but the essence that I have abstracted from them and then foisted on them, the essence of my idea—'*Fruit*'. I therefore declare apples, pears, almonds, etc., to be mere forms of existence, *modi*, of '*Fruit*'. My finite understanding supported by my senses does, of course, *distinguish* an apple from a pear and a pear from an almond, but my speculative reason declares these sensuous differences inessential and irrelevant. It sees in the apple *the same* as in the pear, and in the pear the same as in the almond, namely, '*Fruit*'. Particular real fruits are no more than *semblances*, whose true essence is '*the Substance*'—'*Fruit*'. "*"

* *Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten.* Von F. Engels und K. Marx, Frankfurt a.M., 1845, S. 79.³⁴

In essence, however, German speculative philosophy did not adhere to the viewpoint of substance. "Absolute substance," says Hegel, "is truth, but it is not yet all the truth; it must also be understood as effective and living of itself, and for that reason be defined as Spirit". Let us see how this higher and more truthful point of view is achieved.

"If apples, pears, almonds and strawberries are really nothing but '*the Substance*', '*the Fruit*', the question arises: Why does '*the Fruit*' manifest itself to me sometimes as an apple, sometimes as a pear, sometimes as an almond? Why this *appearance of diversity* which so obviously contradicts my speculative conception of '*Unity*'; '*the Substance*'; '*the Fruit*'?"

"This, answers the speculative philosopher, is because '*the Fruit*' is not dead, undifferentiated, motionless, but living, self-differentiating moving essence. The diversity of the ordinary fruits is significant not only to *my* sensuous understanding, but also for '*the Fruit*' itself and for speculative reason. The different ordinary fruits are different manifestations of the life of the '*one Fruit*'; they are crystallisations of '*the Fruit*' itself. Thus in the apple '*the Fruit*' gives itself an apple-like existence, in the pear—a pear-like existence. We must therefore no longer say, as one might from the standpoint of the Substance: a pear is '*the Fruit*', an apple is '*the Fruit*', an almond is '*the Fruit*', but '*the Fruit*' presents itself as a pear, '*the Fruit*' presents itself as an apple, '*the Fruit*' presents itself as an almond; and the differences which distinguish apples, pears, and almonds from one another are the self-differentiations of '*the Fruit*' and make the particular fruits different members of the life-process of '*the Fruit*'....

"We see that if the Christian religion knows only *one* Incarnation of God, speculative philosophy has as many incarnations as there are things, just as it has here in every fruit an incarnation of the Substance, of the Absolute Fruit. The main interest for the speculative philosopher is therefore to produce the *existence* of the real ordinary fruits and to say in some mysterious way that there are apples, pears, almonds and raisins....

"It goes without saying that the speculative philosopher accomplishes this continuous creation only by representing universally known qualities of the apple, the pear, etc., which exist in reality, as determining features *invented* by him, by giving the *names* of the real things to what abstract reason alone can create, to abstract formulas of reason, finally, by declaring his *own* activity, by which *he passes* from the idea of an apple to the idea of a pear, to be the *self-activity* of the Absolute Subject, '*the Fruit*'."*

* *Die heilige Familie*, S. 80-84.³⁵

This materialist criticism of idealism is as harsh as it is just. The "Absolute Idea", the "Spirit" of German speculative philosophy, was nothing but an abstraction. However, an abstraction which is considered the ultimate solution of the most profound problems of science, can be only detrimental to the latter's progress. And if those thinkers who addressed themselves to this abstraction rendered great services to human thought, they did so *despite* that abstraction, not *thanks* to it, inasmuch as it did not hamper their study of the actual movement of things. We find splendid thoughts in Schelling's philosophy of Nature. He possessed considerable knowledge in the realm of the natural sciences, but to him the "*material universe*" was nothing but the "*revealed world of Ideas*". Perhaps he was not contradicting himself when he asserted that "*magnetism* is a universal act of inspiration, the implanting of unity in multiplicity, of notion in difference" and that "that very intrusion of the subjective into the objective, which in the ideal ... is self-consciousness, is here expressed in being". But does this take us a single step towards a cognition of magnetic phenomena or an understanding of magnetism's nature? Not only have we failed to make any progress but we run tremendous risk of denying actual facts to please a theory which may seem to us more or less ingenious but in any case is absolutely arbitrary.

The same may be said of the history of mankind. As Sir Alexander Grant once put it, to borrow philosophy from Hegel's *History of Philosophy* is tantamount to borrowing poetry from Shakespeare, i.e., is almost inevitable. In certain respects, a study of Hegel's philosophy of history, or of his aesthetics, his philosophy of law or his logic, is necessary at present too. But it is not the idealist point of view that gives all these works their value. On the contrary, that point of view is quite *barren*: it is *fruitful* only in respect of *engendering confusion*. Thus, for instance, Hegel describes, with an ingenuity that would do credit to an expert, the influence of the geographical environment on the historical development of human societies. But is he able to explain anything at all when he says that "the Determinate Spirit of a people, since it is active and its freedom derives from Nature, bears a specific geographical and climatic impress thanks to the latter"? Or—to take up an example he himself makes use of—does he bring us a single step closer to an understanding of the history of Sparta when he says that the mores of that country, like its State structure, were merely moments in the evolution of notion? It is true, of course, that the viewpoint of the "French philosophers", against whom he cites this example (the viewpoint of interaction, which remains an insurmountable boundary of their most fruitful researches), is quite insufficient. It

is, however, not enough to reject this point of view; what is essential is to show in what measure a "*Notion*" can be a secret main-spring promoting social progress. Not only was Hegel *never able* to reply to this perfectly lawful question but he seems to have been little satisfied with the light notion allegedly shed on the history of mankind. He felt the need to stand on firm ground and make a careful study of *social relations*, so he ended up by categorically stating that "*property inequality was the main cause of Lacedaemon's decline*." All this is true, but that truth does not contain a jot of *absolute idealism*.*

Try to imagine that someone has explained to us with amazing clarity the mechanism of the movements of animals but then goes on to say, with the utmost gravity, that the vital and concealed cause of all these movements is to be found in the *shadows* cast by moving bodies. That someone is an "*absolute*" idealist. Perhaps, we shall share the views of this idealist for a certain time, but I hope that in the final analysis we shall understand the *science of mechanics* and bid "*a long farewell*" to his "*philosophy of mechanics*".

That, at least, is how various disciples of Hegel behaved. Though they were capable of a high appreciation of the advantages provided by the great thinker's method, they went over to the *materialist point of view*. The excerpts from *The Holy Family* cited above will suffice to show how definitive and ruthless their criticism of idealist speculative philosophy was.

The dialectical method is the most characteristic feature of present-day materialism; therein lies its essential distinction from the old metaphysical materialism of the eighteenth century. One can therefore form an opinion of the profundity of the views and the seriousness of those historians of literature and philosophy who have not deigned to notice that distinction. The late Lange divided his *History of Materialism* into two parts—materialism *before* and *after* Kant.

Another kind of division must of necessity suggest itself to anyone who has not been blinded by the spirit of some school or by cut-and-dried concepts: materialism after Hegel was no longer what it had been *prior* to him. But could anything else have been expected? To judge of the influence nineteenth-century idealism has had on the development of materialism, one should first and foremost realise what the latter has become today. This was something that Lange never did. Though in his book he spoke of all and sundry, even of nonentities like *Heinrich Szolbe*, he made no mention at all of dialectical materialism. This learned

* For other examples of the same kind we shall refer the reader to our article "For the Sixtieth Anniversary of Hegel's Death, *Neue Zeit*, 1891-92, Nos. 7, 8, 9.³⁸

historian of materialism did not even suspect that there were contemporary materialists who were remarkable in quite a different way than Messrs. Vogt, Moleschott and Co.*

The ease with which dialectical materialism was able to overcome idealism should seem inexplicable to anyone who lacks a clear understanding of the fundamental question separating the materialists from the idealists. People guided by *dualist* prejudices usually think, for example, that there are *two completely different substances in man: body or matter*, on the one hand, and on the other, the *soul*, the *spirit*. Though they do not know and often do not even ask how one of these substances can affect the other, people nevertheless consider that they are fully aware it would be "*one-sided*" to explain phenomena with the aid of only one of these two substances. Such people are smugly aware of their superiority over the two extremes, and are *neither* idealists *nor* materialists. However venerable the age of this long-standing mode of considering philosophical questions may be, it is in essence worthy only of the philistine. Philosophy has never been able to feel satisfaction with such "*many-sidedness*": on the contrary, it has tried to rid itself of the *dualism* so beloved of *eclectic* minds. The most outstanding philosophical systems have always been monist, i.e., have regarded *spirit* and *matter* merely as two classes of phenomena whose cause is inseparably one and the same. We have already seen that the French materialists regarded the "*faculty of sensation*" as *one of the properties of matter*. To Hegel, Nature was merely an "*otherness*" of the Absolute Idea. This "*otherness*" is in certain measure the Idea's Fall from Grace; Nature is the creation of the Spirit, existing only thanks to its favour. This imaginary Fall in no way precludes the identity in substance between Nature and Spirit; on the contrary, it *presupposes* that identity. Hegel's Absolute Spirit is not the *limited* spirit of the philosophy of *limited* minds. Hegel was well able to ridicule those who saw in Matter and Spirit two different substances "just as mutually impenetrable as any matter is assumed to be in respect of another, existing only in their mutual non-being in each other pores, just like with Epi-

* In this respect, incidentally, Lange followed the views and customs of all learned writers belonging to "*good society*". In his turn, *Hettner* often compared the doctrine of *Diderot* with that of the *modern materialists*. But whom did he consider as representative of modern materialists? Moleschott! *Hettner* knows so little of the condition of modern materialism that he is sure he is expressing something very profound in writing: "In the doctrine of morality, materialism has not yet risen above such miserable attempts (i.e., those made by the eighteenth-century materialists.—G.P.). If materialism would adduce proof of its viability, then its immediate and most important task lies in evolving a doctrine of morality" (*Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, 2. Teil, Braunschweig, 1881, S. 402). You are late to recall it, dear Sirl

curus who gave the gods sojourn in the pores of the Cosmos, but quite consistently burdened them with no communion with the world". Despite his hostility towards materialism, Hegel appreciated its *monist trend*.^{*} But if we have adopted the *monist* point of view, it is experience itself that should decide which of the two theories—*idealism* or *materialism*—provides the better explanation of the phenomena we encounter in the study of Nature and human societies. It will easily be seen that even in the field of *psychology*, a science studying facts that can be called mostly phenomena of the spirit, our work proceeds with greater success when we accept Nature as *primary*, and consider the actions of the spirit as necessary consequences of the movement of matter. "Surely no one," says *agnostic* Huxley, "who is cognisant of the facts of the case, nowadays doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is, nevertheless, far more consistent with fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical entity seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument."^{**} In the area of the social sciences as understood in the broad sense of the term, idealism, as we have already pointed out, has often arrived at a consciousness of its incapacity, and resorted to a purely materialist explanation of historical facts.

We shall again emphasise that the great revolution in German philosophy in the fifth decade of our century was greatly fostered by the essentially *monist* nature of German idealism. "It is, in fact, the case," Robert Flint says, "that Hegelianism, although the most elaborate of all idealistic systems, presents only the feeblest of barriers even to materialism." This is perfectly true, though Flint should have said "as a consequence of being" instead of "although".

* "Yet one should recognise in materialism an enthusiastic striving to emerge from the limits of a dualism which assumes two different worlds as equally substantial and true, and to do away with the sunderance of the initial unity." (*Encyklopädie*, III. Teil, § 389 und Zusatz). We shall note, in passing, that in his *History of Philosophy* Hegel gave in a few words a better appraisal of French materialism and of such men as Helvetius than the professional historians of materialism did.

** [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of Huxley's *Hume*. (*English Men of Letters*) *Hume, sa vie, sa philosophie*, trad. de l'anglais par G. Compayré, Paris, 1880, p. 108. It would be correct to say that, despite everything, agnosticism is simply a cowardly materialism that tries to preserve an air of decency.

The selfsame Flint is quite right when he goes on to say the following: "It is true that thought is placed by it" (Hegel's system.—G.P.) "before matter, and matter is represented as the stage of a process of thought; but since the thought which is placed before matter is unconscious thought—thought which is neither subject nor object, which is therefore not real thought, nor even so much as a ghost or phantasm of thought—*matter is still the first reality*, the first actual existence, and the power in matter, the tendency in it to rise above itself, the root and basis of spirit subjective, objective, and absolute."* It will easily be understood how this inconsistency, *inevitable* in idealism, facilitated the revolution in philosophy we are referring to. This inconsistency makes itself particularly felt in the *philosophy of history*. "Hegel is guilty of being doubly half-hearted: firstly in that, while declaring that philosophy is the mode of existence of the Absolute Spirit, he refuses to recognise the *actual* philosophical individual as the Absolute Spirit; secondly, in that he lets the Absolute Spirit as the Absolute Spirit make history only *in appearance*. For since the Absolute Spirit becomes *conscious* of itself as the creative World Spirit only *post festum* in the philosopher, its making of history exists only in the consciousness, in the opinion and conception of the philosopher, i.e., only in the speculative imagination." These lines come from *Karl Marx*, the father of present-day dialectical materialism.**

The significance of the philosophical revolution brought about by this man of genius was expressed by him in the following brief words: "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."***

Before setting forth the results Marx obtained with the aid of this method, we shall make a cursory review of the trends that emerged in French historical science during the *Restoration*.

The French "philosophers" were convinced that it was public opinion that governed the world. When they recollected that, according to their own sensualist theory, man, with his opinions, is

* *Philosophy of History in France and Germany*, Edinburgh and London, 1874. p. 503.

** *Die heilige Familie*, S. 127.³⁷

*** *Das Kapital*, I. Band, 3. Aufl., Vorwort zur 2. Aufl., S. XIX.³⁸

a product of the social environment, they averred that "*everything depends on legislation*", supposing that this brief but instructive reply settled the question. Further, to them "legislation" meant first and foremost *public law*, the "government" of each particular country. During the first decades of our century, this point of view was ever more rejected. It was beginning to be asked whether it would not be more correct to seek for the roots of *political institutions in civil law*.^{*} The replies to this question were now affirmative.

"It is through an examination of political institutions," Guizot wrote, "that most writers, scholars, historians or publicists have sought to understand the condition of society, and the degree or brand of its civilisation. It would have been wiser to begin with a study of society itself in order to ascertain and understand its political institutions. Prior to becoming cause, institutions are an effect; society creates them before itself being modified by their influence and, instead of trying to discover in the system or forms of government what the condition of a people has been, one should first and foremost examine the condition of a people to learn what its government should or could be.... Society, its composition, the way of life of individuals according to their social standing, the relations between various classes of individuals, and finally the *status of individuals*—this is assuredly the first question that attracts the attention of the historian who wishes to know how peoples lived, and of the publicist writer who wishes to learn how they were governed."^{**} What we have here is a complete revolution in the historical views of the "philosophers". But Guizot goes even farther in his analysis of the "composition of society". In his opinion, the civil life of all *modern peoples* is intimately linked with *landed-property relations*, which is why the latter should be studied before civil life. "To understand political institutions, one should know the various social conditions

* Following the events of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, it was no longer so easy to think that "it is public opinion that governs the world"; those events often revealed the impotence of public opinion. "So many events decided by force; so many crimes absolved by success; so many virtues branded by censure; so many misfortunes insulted by might; so many generous sentiments made the butt of mockery; so many vile calculations hypocritically commented on; all these were down hope even in those who were most devoted to the cult of reason ...", wrote Mme. de Staël in the eighth year of the French republic (*De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, t. I, p. IV, Introduction). Indeed, all the utopians of the Restoration³⁹ and Louis-Philippe period were convinced that public opinion governed the world. This was the underlying principle of their philosophy of history. However, we shall not deal here with the psychology of the utopians.

^{**} *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, 10^e éd., Paris, 1860, pp. 73-74. The first edition of these *Essais* appeared in 1822.

and their relations. To understand the various social conditions one should know the nature and relations of landed property."* It was from this point of view that Guizot examined the history of France under the *Merovingians* and the *Carolingians*. In his history of the English Revolution, he took a new step forward in regarding that event as an episode in the class struggle of modern society, making *property relations* rather than *landed-property relations* the backbone of political movements.

Augustin Thierry arrived at the same views. In his writings on the history of England and France, he regarded the development of society as the motivation of political events. He was very far from thinking that the world was governed by public opinion, which to him meant only a more or less appropriate expression of social interests. Here is an example of his understanding of the struggle waged by Parliament against Charles I. "Anyone whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror, left his castle for the Royalist camp to take a position in keeping with his rank. The townsmen flocked to the opposite camp.... Idlers and those who wanted only enjoyment without labour, irrespective of the caste they belonged to, joined the Royalist forces to defend their own interests; at the same time families of the caste of former conquerors who had made good in industry joined the Parliamentary party. On both sides the war was conducted for these positive interests. All the rest was merely a semblance or a pretext. Those who defended the cause of the *subjects* were mostly *Presbyterians*, i.e., were opposed to all and any subordination even in religion. Those who supported the opposite cause belonged to the Church of England or the Catholic faith. That was because, even in the realm of religion, they wanted power and the right to tax others."**

This is fairly clear, *but seems clearer than it actually is*. Political revolutions are indeed a consequence of the struggle that classes wage for their positive interests, their *economic* interests. But what is the cause that gives the economic interests of a particular class one form or another? What is the cause that gives rise to classes in society? True, Augustin Thierry speaks of "*manufactures*", but with him this concept is very vague, and to cope with this difficulty, he goes back to the Norman Conquest. Thus, the classes whose struggle gave rise to the English Revolution owed their descent to the Norman Conquest. "*All this began with the Conquest*," he says, "*and it is the Conquest that underlies the*

* *Essais sur l'Histoire de France* pp. 75-76.

** *Œuvres complètes de M. Augustin Thierry*, VI tome, 10 éd., Paris, 1866, p. 66. The article we are quoting from—"Vues des révolutions d'Angleterre"—was published in *Censeur Européen* in 1817, i.e., several years before the appearance of Guizot's *Essais*.

whole matter. But what is to be understood by conquest? Does it not return us to the activities of "government", for which we have attempted to find an explanation? Even if we disregard all this, the fact of conquest can never account for the *social consequences* of that conquest. Prior to the conquest of Gaul by the Barbarians, it had been conquered by the Romans, but the social consequences of these two conquests were quite different. Wherein lay the cause? Without any doubt, the Gauls of Caesar's times lived in conditions different from that of the fifth-century Gauls; neither can there be any doubt that the Roman conquerors in no way resembled the "Barbarians"—the Franks and the Burgundians. But can all these distinctions be accounted for by other conquests? We can enumerate all kinds of *known* and all *possible* conquests. Nevertheless, we shall remain within a vicious circle; each time we return to the inescapable conclusion that there is, in the life of peoples, a something, an *x*, an unknown quantity, to which the "*strength*" of the peoples themselves and of the various classes existing in them owes its *origin*, its *direction* and its *modifications*. In short, it is clear that such "*strength*" is based on a something, so that the question can be reduced to a definition of the nature of that unknown quantity.*

Guizot is also hemmed in by the selfsame contradictions. What do the "*property relations*" in the peoples spoken of in his *Essais* owe their origin to? They stem from the actions of *conquerors*: "After the conquest, the Franks became landowners.... The absolute independence of their landed property was their right, just as the independence of their persons was; that independence had no other guarantee than the strength of the possessor but, in using his strength to defend it, he thought he was exercising his right", etc.**

It is no less characteristic that, for Guizot, civil life was closely linked with "landed-property relations" *only* in the case of "modern peoples".

Neither Mignet nor any other French historian of the time (and the French historians of the time were outstanding in more than one respect) was able to extricate himself from the difficulty that brought Guizot and Augustin Thierry to a standstill. They were already well aware that the cause of society's development should be sought in its economic relations. They already

* Augustin Thierry owed the clearest of his historical views to *Saint-Simon*, who did very much to explain mankind's historical development. However, he was unable to define the *x* we have mentioned above. To him, *human nature* was in essence a sufficient cause of mankind's development. He came up against the same stumbling block as the eighteenth-century materialist philosophers. Incidentally, we hope to be able to set forth Saint-Simon's views in a special essay.⁴⁰

** Guizot, op. cit., pp. 81-83.

realised that underlying *political movements* were *economic interests*, which were paving a way there. After the French Revolution, that epic struggle waged by the bourgeoisie against the nobility and the clergy,* it would have been hard to fail to understand that. However, they were unable to explain the *origin* of society's economic structure. Whenever they dealt with this subject, they addressed themselves to conquest, harking back to the viewpoint held in the eighteenth century, since the conqueror was also a "legislator", only from without.

Thus, Hegel, against his will, so to say, arrived at the conclusion that the solution of the mystery of the peoples' historical destinies should be sought in their *social conditions* (in "*property*"). The French historians of the Restoration, for their part, *deliberately* referred to "*positive interests*", to economic conditions, as an explanation of the origin and development of various forms of "*government*". However, neither of them—neither the idealist philosopher nor the positive historiographers—were able to solve the grand problem that inescapably confronted them: on what, in its turn, did the *structure of society, property relations*, depend. As long as this grand problem remained unsolved, all research into what was called in France *les sciences morales et politiques* was not built on any genuinely scientific foundation, it was with full justice that these pseudo-sciences could be contrasted with mathematics and the natural sciences as the sole "*exact*" sciences, those specifically termed sciences.

Thus the task of *dialectical materialism* was determined in advance. Philosophy, which had in past centuries rendered vast services to *natural science*, now had to lead *social science* out of the labyrinth of its contradictions. On accomplishing that task, philosophy might say: "*I have fulfilled my duty, and can now depart*", since *exact science* is bound, in the future, to render the *hypotheses of philosophy* quite useless.

The features of a new understanding of history, excellently formulated and set forth with the utmost clarity, are already contained in articles by Marx and Engels in the *Deutsch-Französische*

* The liberal French historians of the Restoration often spoke of the *class struggle* and, moreover, made *sympathetic reference* to it. They were not even horrified by the spilling of blood. "...So I repeat that war, that is to say the revolution, was necessary," Thiers exclaimed in a note to his *History of the French Revolution* (éd. de 1834, t. I, p. 365). "God has given people justice only at the price of struggle." As long as the *bourgeoisie* had not yet completed its struggle against the *aristocracy*, the theorists of the bourgeoisie had no objections to the class struggle. The appearance on the historical scene of the *proletariat*, with its struggle against the bourgeoisie, brought considerable changes into the views of those theorists, who today find the standpoint of the "class struggle" too "*narrow-minded*". Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis!

Jahrbücher, Paris, 1844; *The Holy Family* by the same two authors; *The Condition of the Working Class in England* by Engels; *The Poverty of Philosophy* by Marx; *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels, and *Wage Labour and Capital* by Marx. However, we find a systematic if brief outline in Marx's book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Berlin, 1859.

"In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines, their consciousness."*

But what is meant by *relations of production*? It is what is called in legal parlance *property relations*, of which Guizot and Hegel spoke. In explaining the origin of these relations, Marx's theory thus replies to a question that the representatives of science and philosophy prior to him had been unable to answer.

Man, together with his "*opinions*" and "*education*", is a product of his social environment as was well known to the *French materialists of the eighteenth century*, though they often lost sight of this. The historical development of "*public opinion*", like the entire history of mankind, is a *law-governed process*, as was stated by the *German idealists* of the nineteenth century. This process, however, is determined, not by the properties of the "*World Spirit*", as such idealists thought, but by the *actual conditions of man's existence*. The forms of "*government*", of which the philosophers had so much to say, are rooted in what Guizot tersely called *society*, and Hegel *civil society*. But the development of civil society is determined by the development of the productive forces at men's disposal. Marx's understanding of history, called *narrow-minded* and *one-sided* by the ignoramuses, is in fact the lawful outcome of centuries of development of historical ideas. It contains them all, inasmuch as they possess genuine value; it places them on far firmer ground than they ever stood on during any period of their efflorescence. That is why, to use an already quoted expression of Hegel's, it is *the most developed, rich and concrete* of them.

* Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Vorwort, S. V.⁴¹

The eighteenth-century philosophers were incessantly referring to *human nature*, which was called upon to explain the history of mankind and specify the qualities that a "*perfect legislation*" should possess. This was the idea underlying all utopias: in their ideal conceptions of a *perfect society*, the utopians always proceeded from argumentations regarding human nature. Augustin Thierry's and Guizot's "*conquest*" also takes us back to human nature, i.e., to the more or less well imagined, the more or less arbitrary "*nature*" of the conqueror.* But if *human nature* is something *constant*, then it is patently absurd to wish to explain, with its help, mankind's *historical fortunes*, which are *changeable* in their essence; if human nature is given to change, then one should ask oneself the following question: *why* does that change take place? The German idealists, those past masters of logic, have already admitted that human nature is a piece of most egregious fiction. They have tried to establish the motivation of historical development *outside of man*, who, in their opinion, obeys only the irresistible urges of that cause. To them, however, that motive force was the *World Spirit*, i.e., *one aspect of human nature that had passed through the filter of abstraction*. Marx's theory has now put an end to all such fictions, errors and contradictions. *Through the impact of his labour on Nature, which exists outside of him, man changes his own nature*. Consequently, human nature, in its turn, has its own history; to understand that history, one has to understand how man's impact takes place *on Nature, which exists outside of him*.

Helvetius made an attempt to explain the development of human societies by basing it on *men's physical needs*. This attempt was doomed to failure because, strictly speaking, what should have been examined was not man's needs, but the *ways* in which they could be satisfied.

An animal has physical wants just as man has. However, animals do not *produce* anything; they simply *gain possession* of objects, whose production is, so to speak, left to Nature. To gain possession of such objects, they use *their organs*—teeth, tongue,

* In his above-cited *Essais*, Guizot often makes direct reference to the "*needs of human nature*". In the second chapter of his book *De la propriété*, Thiers attempts to prove that "...observation of human nature is the true method to be followed to demonstrate man's rights in society". None of the eighteenth-century "philosophers" would have raised the least objections to this kind of "method". Moreover, the communist and socialist utopians Thiers was opposed to would have had nothing against it either. Their arguments on social organisation were always based on one understanding or other of human nature. In this respect, the utopians' point of view in no way differed from those of their opponents. It goes without saying that this did not at all prevent them from "deducing" human rights that were different from those "deduced" by Thiers, for instance.

limbs, and so on. That is why an animal's adaptation to its natural environment is effected through a transformation of its organs, by changes in its *anatomical structure*. Matters are not so simple as that with the animal that proudly calls itself *Homo sapiens*.

"He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to *appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his wants*." He is a *producer* and uses *tools* in the process of production. "Leaving out of consideration such ready-made means of subsistence as fruits, in gathering which a man's own limbs serve as the instruments of his labour, the first thing of which the labourer possesses himself is not the subject of labour but its instrument. Thus Nature becomes one of the organs of his activity, one that he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible." * It is thus that his struggle for existence differs substantially from that waged by the other animals: the tool-making animal adapts himself to his natural environment by *changing his artificial organs*. In comparison with these changes, those in his *anatomical structure have lost all significance*. Thus Darwin says that Europeans who have settled in America very soon undergo physical changes. However, in the opinion of Darwin himself, these changes are "*most insignificant*"; they are quite *negligible* as compared with the innumerable changes in the Americans' *artificial organs*. Thus, as soon as man becomes a toolmaking animal, he enters a new phase of his development: his *zoological* development comes to an end, and his *historical* life road commences.

Darwin questions the view that there are no animals that make use of tools. He cites many instances to prove the reverse: in its natural state, the chimpanzee uses a stone to split hard-shelled wild fruit; in India, trained elephants break branches off trees and use them to keep flies away. All this may be perfectly true, but it should not be forgotten, in the first place, that *quantitative* changes turn into *qualitative* distinctions. With animals, the use of tools, is to be met only in an *embryonic state*; their influence on animals' way of life is *infinitesimal*; conversely, the use of tools exerts a *decisive* influence on man's way of life. It is in this sense that Marx says: "The use and fabrication of instruments of labour, although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process." **

It is self-evident that man does not only use mechanical means of labour, but Marx considers the latter more characteristic of him: they comprise what he calls *the bone and muscle structure of*

* *Das Kapital*, 3. Aufl., S. 157.⁴²

** *ibid.*, S. 158.⁴³

production. Their relics have the same significance for an appraisal of *extinct economic social systems* as the remains of bones have for the study of extinct species of animals. "It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs." * Prior to Marx, the historians and "sociologists", who were full of idealist prejudices, did not even suspect how valuable a means for most important discoveries this *fossil technology* could be. "Darwin has interested us in the history of Nature's Technology, i.e., in the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which organs serve as instruments of production for sustaining life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organisation, deserve equal attention? And would not such a history be easier to compile, since, as Vico says, human history differs from natural history in this, that we have made the former, but not the latter." **

The present-day historians of culture speak facetiously of the *Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages*, a division of pre-historic times that is based on the main materials used for the production of weapons and utensils. These epochs are subdivided into various periods, e.g., those of chipped stone and of polished stone. Consequently, the historians do not completely close their eyes to fossil technology, but they regrettably limit themselves in this area to general remarks that can lead to nothing but the commonplace. They withdraw into this area only for want of something better, and abandon it as soon as the discovery is made in history, in the proper meaning of the term, of other facts that seem more worthy of man and his mind. In this respect, they follow in the main the example of the eighteenth century, behaving in the way Condorcet did a hundred years ago.

Condorcet's celebrated *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* begins with a description of the development of primitive man's productive forces from the most uncouth "arts" to the rudiments of agriculture. Condorcet goes so far as to state that "the art of making weapons, cooking food, and obtaining the utensils needed for that cooking, preserving the cooked food for a certain time for provision against the seasons when it was impossible to find fresh food... was the first feature distinguishing human society from the societies of other species of animals". At the same time, Condorcet was fully aware that so important an "art" as agriculture was bound to have a vast influence on the *structure of society*. However, his "third epoch" of the history of mankind already includes "the progress of agricultural peoples until the invention of alphabetical writing"; the fourth is that of the

* *Das Kapital*, 3. Aufl., S. 158.⁴⁴

** *ibid.*, S. 374-75, Anmerkung, 89.⁴⁵

progress of the human spirit in Greece until *the division of the sciences* in the age of Alexander; the fifth is marked by *the progress of the sciences*, and so on. Quite unwittingly, Condorcet completely changed the principle of his division, at once revealing that he first spoke only of the development of the productive forces because he had no other choice. In exactly the same way, it emerges that the "progress" achieved in the field of production and people's material life in general was seen by him only as a *measure* of the progress of the spirit, to which they owed everything, without repayment of anything of the same kind.

To Condorcet, the means of production were an effect, while man's spiritual abilities, his spirit, were a *cause*. Since, as a metaphysician, he remained blind to the dialectics inherent in any process in Nature or in society, according to which any *cause* is a *cause* only after it has been an effect, and any *effect*, in its turn, becomes a *cause*; since he noted the existence of such dialectics only when manifested in the special form of *the relation of interaction*, it was natural for him to prefer taking the bull by the horns and—insofar as he was able, and not obliged, to act otherwise—to address himself to cause. To him, the human spirit was the prime mover of historical development. It was to that spirit that Condorcet, like all "*philosophers*", attributed a "natural" proclivity towards *progress*. This was of course a highly superficial point of view, but we shall be fair, and ask: have the present-day historians of culture departed very far from Condorcet's point of view? *

It is as clear as day that the use of implements, however imperfect, presupposes the relatively tremendous development of the intellectual faculties. A lot of water had run under the bridge before our ape-man ancestors achieved that degree of the development of the "*spirit*". How did they achieve it? We should put that question, not to history but to *zoology*. For the latter, the reply has been given by Darwin, who has at least shown how man's zoological evolution *could* have reached the point that interests us. True, the ape-man "spirit" plays a fairly passive role in Darwin's

* Incidentally, the economists do not lag behind the historians of culture in this respect. An instance is provided by what Michel Chevalier has to say about the progress achieved in labour productivity: "Man's productive force develops constantly in the succession of epochs of civilisation. That development is one of the numerous and most attractive forms taken by the progress of society itself" (*Weltausstellung von 1867. Berichte des internationalen Jury. Einleitung von Michel Chevalier*, S. 21-22). Thus, it is *progress* that takes mankind forward, a certain metaphysical entity which, among its numerous forms, also adopts the form of the development of the productive forces. This is the same old story of the idealist embodiment of the objects of thought, of the products of abstraction, the same old story of the shadows cast by moving bodies and called upon to explain to us the mystery of the latter's movements.

hypothesis, since that hypothesis does not deal with its allegedly natural trend towards progress, inasmuch as the latter is effected through a conjuncture of circumstances whose nature is not very elevated. Thus, according to Darwin, "Man could not have attained his present dominant position in the world without the use of his hands, which are so admirably adapted to act in obedience to his will." * This was already asserted by Helvetius: he considered the development of the limbs—horribile dictu—the cause of the brain's development, and what is far worse, that the development of the limbs was brought about, not by the ape-man's spirit but by the influence of the natural environment.

However that may be, zoology passes its *Homo* on to history as already possessing faculties necessary for the invention and employment of the most primitive implements. That is why history should merely *trace* the development of artificial organs and establish their influence on the development of the spirit, as has been done by zoology in respect of the *natural organs*. Since the latter's development took place under the influence of the natural environment, it can be readily understood that things were the same with *artificial organs*.

The inhabitants of a country that has no metals cannot invent implements that are better than stone tools. For man to have domesticated the horse, cow, sheep and other animals, which have played such an important part in the development of his productive forces, he had to live in lands in which these animals—or rather their zoological ancestors—were to be found in a wild state. It was not in the *steppes*, of course, that the art of navigation arose, and so on. Consequently, the natural environment, the *geographical environment*, its *poverty* or *wealth*, exerted an indisputable influence on the development of industry. Moreover, the character of the geographical environment played another and even more remarkable role in the history of culture.

"It is not the mere fertility of the soil", says Marx, "but the differentiation of the soil, the variety of its natural products, the changes of the seasons, which form the physical basis for the social divisions of labour, and which, by changes in the natural surroundings, spur man on to the multiplication of his wants, his capabilities, his means and modes of labour. It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economising, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are, the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or in India and Persia where irrigation by means of artificial canals, not only supplies the soil with the water indis-

* *The Descent of Man*, etc., Part I, Ch. II.

pensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilisers."*

Thus, man obtains from his natural environment the material for his artificial organs, with the aid of which he wages a struggle against Nature. The kind of environment that surrounds him determines the character of his productive activities, his *means of production*. *But the means of production just as inevitably determine the mutual relations among men in the process of production*, as an army's weapons determine all its organisation and all the mutual relations of the individuals it is made up of. But then the relations between people in the social process of production determine the entire structure of society. Consequently, the influence exerted on that structure by the natural environment is indisputable: *the character of the natural environment determines the character of the social environment*.

An illustration: "The necessity for predicting the rise and fall of the Nile created Egyptian astronomy, and with it the dominion of the priests, as directors of agriculture."**

But this is only one aspect of the matter. To avoid arriving at quite erroneous conclusions, another aspect has to be taken into account at the same time.

Production relations are an effect; productive forces are a *cause*. In its turn, however, an effect turns into a cause; production relations become a new source of the development of the productive forces; this brings about a double result.

1) The interaction between production relations and productive forces is a cause of *social movement*, which has its own logic and laws that are independent of the natural environment.

For example: at the first stage of its development, private property is always the result of the labour of the proprietor himself, as can well be seen in the Russian countryside. But there comes, of necessity, a time when private property acquires a character opposite to what it previously possessed: it presupposes the labour of another man, and becomes *capitalist* private property as can also be daily observed in the Russian countryside. This phenomenon is a consequence of the inherent laws of the evolution of private property. All that the *natural environment* is capable of

* *Das Kapital*, S. 525, 526⁴⁶. "Consequently, while lands in the tropical zone possess natural wealth, lands in the temperate zone are most favourable for the development of man" (*Géographie physique comparée considérée dans ses rapports avec l'histoire de l'humanité*, par Arnold Guyot. Nouvelle édition, Paris, 1888, p. 256).

** *Das Kapital*, I, S. 525⁴⁷. In Asia, as in Egypt, "civilisation develops in easily cultivated plains with alluvial soil ... and equally tends to develop along big rivers" (Guyot, op. cit., p. 277. Cf. Metschnikoff, *La civilisation et les grands fleuves historiques*, Paris, 1889).

effecting in this case consists in the *acceleration* of that development, *by favouring the development of the productive forces*.

2) Since social evolution has its specific logic, which is independent of any kind of direct influence on the part of the natural environment, it may happen that one and the same people, though it lives in one and the same country and maintains its physical features with almost no change, can possess, in various periods of its history, social and political institutions that bear little resemblance to each other and may even be quite their opposites. Attempts have been made to draw the conclusion therefrom that the geographical environment exerts no influence on the history of mankind. This conclusion, however, is quite erroneous.* The peoples that inhabited England in the times of *Julius Caesar* experienced the influence of the same geographical environment as did the English in the times of *Cromwell*. However, Cromwell's contemporaries possessed productive forces far more powerful than the peoples of Caesar's time. The geographical environment exerted a different influence, since Cromwell's contemporaries had a quite different impact on the natural environment. The productive forces in seventeenth-century England were the outcome of her history; however, throughout that history, the geographical environment never ceased from *exerting an influence, though always in different ways, on the country's economic development*.

The interrelation between social man and the geographical environment is *greatly subject to change*. It is affected by each new step made in the development of man's productive forces. In consequence, the influence of the geographical environment on social man leads to *differing results at different phases of the development of those forces*. Yet there is nothing *fortuitous* in the changing interrelations between man and his habitat: in their succession, those relations form a *law-governed pattern*. To understand that process, one should not forget that the natural environment *becomes an important factor in mankind's historical development, not as a result of its influence on human nature but because of its influence on the development of the productive forces*.

"The temperature of this land" (the reference is to the temperate zone of Asia.—*G. P.*), "in respect of the seasons of the year, which do not show any intemperate variations, mostly approaches the temperature of spring. But it is impossible for men in such a country to be courageous and vigorous, to stand up to labour

* *Voltaire* also superficially rejected the influence of the geographical environment on human societies as accepted by *Montesquieu*. We have seen that *Holbach*, entangled in contradictions stemming from his metaphysical method, now accepted, now denied that influence. In general, the confusion brought into this question by metaphysicians of all shades is doubtlessly one of the most striking illustrations of the untenability of this method.

and fatigue.... If the Asians are timid, without courage, less warlike and of a milder disposition than Europeans are, it is again in the nature of the seasons that the main cause should be sought. With the former, far from experiencing any great changes, they are very much alike, and pass from heat to cold in an imperceptible manner. Now in such a temperature, the spirit does not experience the powerful impacts, or the body the violent changes that naturally impress on man a sterner, more inflexible and more mettlesome character than when he has to live in a temperature that is always equable, because it is rapid changes from one extreme to another that arouse man's spirit and wrest it out of a state of complacency and lassitude."

These lines were written very long ago, for they belong to *Hippocrates*.^{*} But even today there are quite a number of writers who have made no further advance in their appraisal of the influence of the geographical environment on mankind: it is the habitat that determines race, morals, science, philosophy, religion and, as an inevitable consequence, the social and political institutions.^{**}

This may sound like the truth, but is in reality just as superficial as are all other attempts to explain the phenomena of social evolution with the aid of some concept of *human nature*.

As Buckle has very well put it, the influence of climate and soil on man is *indirect*; "... they have ... originated the most important consequences in regard to the general organisations of society, and from them there have followed many of those large and conspicuous differences between nations, which are often ascribed to some fundamental difference in the various races into which mankind is divided."^{***} Buckle willingly subscribed to a re-

^{*} *Des airs, des eaux et des lieux*, trad., avec texte en regard, de Coray, Paris, 1800, pp. 76-85.

^{**} Just as East Asia has its own characteristic physical nature, it possesses its own characteristic race—the Mongolian.... "This race seems to be, in the main, of a melancholy temperament; its mediocre intellectual capacities are exercised on details, and never rise either to general ideas or to profound speculation in the area of the natural sciences or philosophy. Skilled, inventive and ingenious in the practical arts that create the comforts of daily life, the Mongol is quite unable, however, to generalise their application. For him, who is totally absorbed in earthly matters, the world of great thoughts and lofty visions is sealed off. All his philosophy and religion boil down to a code of social morals, which is nothing but an expression of the principles of immediate experience, without the observance of which society cannot exist" (Arnold Guyot, *op. cit.*, p. 269).

^{***} *History of Civilisation in England*, Leipzig (Brockhaus), 1865, Vol. I, pp. 36-37. Incidentally Buckle has said nothing new here, just as anywhere else. Long before him and far better than he has done, the absolute idealist Hegel was able to appraise Nature's influence on man through the productive forces and, in particular, through the social organisation (cf., for example, his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, hrsg. von Gans, S. 99,

mark made by John Stuart Mill that "...of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences". However, in speaking of Nature's influence on mankind's historical development, the selfsame Buckle commits the same errors with which he has reproached others so strongly and with full justification.

"Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are more frequent and more destructive in Italy, and in the Spanish and Portuguese peninsula, than in any other of the great countries" (of Europe—*G.P.*), "and it is precisely there that superstition is most rife, and the superstitious classes most powerful. Those were the countries where the clergy first established their authority, where the worst corruptions of Christianity took place, and where superstition has during the longest period retained the firmest hold."*

Thus, as Buckle sees it, the habitat influences, not only the *intensity* of the inhabitants' religious sentiments but also the clergy's *social standing*, i.e., the entire social structure of society. But that is not all.

"Now it is remarkable that all the greatest painters, and nearly all the greatest sculptors, modern Europe has possessed, have been produced by the Italian and Spanish peninsulas. In regard to science, Italy has no doubt had several men of conspicuous ability; but their numbers are out of all proportion small when compared with her artists and poets."**

Thus, a country's physical features are of decisive importance to the development of the sciences and arts in it. Have any of the most ardent supporters of the "vulgar" theory of races said anything more bold and less grounded?

100). To acknowledge the direct influence of the geographical environment on "human nature" or, which is the same thing, on the nature of race, is so groundless, that those writers who have acknowledged that influence are obliged at every step to reject that point of view. For instance, here is what Guyot has added to the lines quoted in the previous footnote: "The main habitat of the Mongolian race is the central Asiatic plateau. The nomadic way of life and the patriarchal form of these societies" (created by the Mongols.—*G.P.*) "are a necessary consequence of the barren and arid nature of the localities they inhabit." In just the same way, Hippocrates considered that the Mongols' lack of courage was, at least in part, a "consequence of the laws they obey" (op. cit., p. 86). The Asian peoples' form of rule is monarchical, he says, but "of necessity, people are very cowardly where they are ruled by kings" (op. cit., p. 117). "Convincing proof of what I say is to be seen in the fact that in that same Asia, all Greeks and Barbarians, who are governed by their own laws, without obedience to tyrants, and who therefore work for themselves, are most warlike people" (op. cit., p. 88). This is not yet the full truth but nevertheless an approximation to it.

* *ibid.*, p. 113.

** *ibid.*, p. 114.

The *scientific* history of mankind's spiritual development¹ has yet to be written; for the time being, we have to be content with more or less ingenious hypotheses. However, there are different kinds of hypotheses. Buckle's hypothesis on the influence of Nature does not hold water.

Indeed, ancient Greece was famed for her thinkers just as much as for her artists, yet Nature in Greece is hardly less majestic than in Italy or Spain. Even if we assume that her influence on the human imagination was stronger in Italy than in the homeland of Pericles, it will suffice to recall that "Greater Greece" included Southern Italy and the neighbouring islands, which did not prevent her from "producing" many thinkers.

Just as anywhere else, the fine arts in present-day Italy and Spain have their history. Italian painting flourished over a very short period of not more than fifty or sixty years.* In Spain, too, painting flourished for a brief period. We are quite unable to indicate the causes for Italian painting having flourished just during that period (from the last quarter of the fifteenth century until the first third of the sixteenth century) and not in any other epoch, for instance, fifty years earlier or later: what we do know very well is that Nature in the Italian peninsula has nothing to do with the matter, for it was the same in the fifteenth century as it was in the thirteenth or seventeenth. If a variable magnitude changes, that does not happen because a constant remains unchanged.

To what Buckle has to say on the influence and power of the clergy in Italy, we can object that it would be hard to find an instance more contradictory in essence to the proposition it is called upon to reinforce. In the first place, the role of the clergy in *Catholic* Italy in no way resembled the role of the priests in *ancient* Rome, though the country's physical features underwent no appreciable changes in the interim. In the second place, the Catholic Church being an international body, it is obvious that the Pope, that head of a "superstitious class", owed the greater part of his power in Italy to causes that had nothing in common either with the physical features of the country or with its own social structure.** Often expelled by the inhabitants of Rome, the

* "Within these narrow confines there flourished such accomplished artists as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolomeo, Giorgione, Titian, Sebastiano del Piombo, and Correggio. These confines were very narrow; if you depart from them in either direction you will find incomplete art, on one side, and on the other, decadent art" (Hippolyte Taine, *Philosophie de l'art*, 5^e édition, t. I, Paris, 1893, p. 126).

** Regarding the social causes that have produced this international organisation of the clergy, see the first part of the excellent book by Karl Kautsky, *Thomas More and His Utopia*.

"Holy Father" was able to return to the Eternal City only thanks to help from the transalpine states. Though Rome's quite exclusive position as the abode of the head of the Church exerted a powerful influence on the role of the clergy in all Italy, it should not be thought that the Italian clergy were always more powerful than their counterparts in the other European countries, in Germany, for example. That would be a gross error.*

Students of the history of religions have been prone, right down to our days, to clutch at racial features each time they have come up against any peculiarity in the religious doctrine of some people, the origins of which are difficult to establish. Nevertheless, they have to admit, since it is obvious, the initial similarity of the religions of savages and barbarians inhabiting areas that are quite different in character.** In the same way, they *have been forced* to acknowledge the tremendous influence that any people's way of life and means of production have on the nature of their religious doctrines.*** That is why science would only stand to gain by abandoning all kinds of vague and "hypothetical" reasoning on the direct influence of the geographical environment on any property of the "human spirit", and by trying, first and foremost, to determine the role played by that environment in the development of the productive forces and, through those forces,

* It was St. Bernard who advised Pope Eugene III to abandon the Romans and exchange Rome for the entire world (*urbem pro orbe mutata*).

** "We could quote a countless number of examples of distinctions created by habitat and racial features. However, no distinction of principle can be drawn from that. Uncivilised man's religion is the same everywhere, no matter whether it develops into forms that are absurdly crude or poetically beautiful. We everywhere find naturism, animism, sorcery, fetishism or idolatry, food offerings, anticipation of a life after death" (the author we are quoting from is a Christian—G.P.), "the perpetuation of the forms and conditions of actual life, a cult of the dead and their burial in keeping with that belief" (*Les religions des peuples non-civilisés*, par A. Réville, Paris, 1883, t. II, pp. 221-22).

*** "...On the lowest rung stands the religion of the Australian root-eaters, who engage in hunting in which they show little skill, and the religion of the Bushmen who live mainly by plunder. Mild with the Khoi-Khoi or Hottentots, and with the Kaffirs, who are mostly pastoralists, religion has shown itself bloody and cruel among certain warlike Negro tribes, while with those Negroes engaged mostly in industry and trade without, however, neglecting cattle raising and tilling the soil, the divinity cult is far more humane and civilised, the spirit of trade usually finding expression in certain rites in respect of the spirits. The Polynesian myths immediately reveal a people of land cultivators and fishermen... (Tiele, *Manuel de l'histoire des religions*, traduit du hollandais par Maurice Vernes, Paris, 1880, pp. 17-18). "In a word, it is indisputable that the cycle of holidays set up both by the law of Jehovah and by the book of Deuteronomy was determined by agriculture—that overall foundation of life and religion" (*Revue de l'histoire des religions*, t. II, p. 43). We could cite any number of similar quotations, one more characteristic than the other.

in the entire *social* and *spiritual*—in a word, the *historical*—development of peoples.

But let us go further:

"At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations, it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production."*

Everything finite is that which cancels itself, goes over into its opposite. The reader will see that, according to Marx, the same holds true of both social and political institutions. Any social institution is, first and foremost, a "form of development" of the productive forces. It is, so to speak, the finest period in its life. It gains strength, develops and flourishes. People instinctively become attached to it, and declare it "*divine*" or "*natural*". But old age gradually draws closer and decrepitude sets in. People begin to notice that not everything in a particular institution is as splendid as was previously thought; they engage in a struggle against it, declare it "born of the devil" or "contrary to Nature", and ultimately *abolish* it. This takes place because society's productive forces are no longer the same, because they have taken a new step forward, as a result of which changes have taken place in human relations and in the social process of production. Gradual quantitative changes turn into qualitative distinctions. The times of such changes are marked by leaps, a break in continuity. That is the same dialectics that we know from Hegel but yet it is not the same. In Marx's philosophy, it turned into the complete opposite of what it had been with Hegel. To Hegel, the dialectics of social life, like any dialectics of the finite in general, ultimately had

* Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Vorwort, S. V-VI.⁴⁸

a mystical cause, the nature of the Infinite, Absolute Spirit. With Marx, it depends on absolutely real causes: the development of the means of production at the disposal of society. *Mutatis mutandis*. Darwin took up the same stand to explain the "*origin of species*". Just in the same way as, since Darwin's times, there has been no more need to appeal to trends towards "*progress*" as "*inborn*" in organisms (trends whose existence was considered possible by Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin) for an explanation of the development of species, we today no longer need to appeal, in the field of social science, to mystical "trends" in the "human spirit" so as to understand its "progress". *Men's way of life is sufficient for us to find an explanation of their sentiments and thoughts.*

Fichte complained bitterly that "it is easier to drive most people to consider themselves pieces of lava on the Moon than their own selves". Any good philistine of today will also sooner admit that he is a "piece of lava on the Moon" than accept a theory according to which all his ideas, views and customs owe their origin to the economic relations of his time. He would appeal to human *freedom*, to *reason* and innumerable other no less excellent and estimable things. The good philistines do not even suspect, when they wax indignant with Marx, that it was this "narrow-minded" man who alone solved the contradictions that had tormented science for at least a whole century.

Let us consider an example. What is literature? *Literature*, the good philistines reply in chorus, *is an expression of society*. This is an excellent definition, but it has a shortcoming: it is so *vague* that it says absolutely nothing. In what measure does literature express society? And since society itself develops, how is social development reflected in literature? What literary forms correspond to each phase of mankind's historical development? These inevitable and perfectly legitimate questions, however, remain unanswered in the definition just mentioned. Besides, since literature is an expression of society, it is evident that, before speaking of the development of literature, one must gain an understanding of the *laws of social development and the hidden forces whose consequence that development is*. The reader will see that the given definition has some value only because it presents us with a problem to which the "philosophers" of the times of Voltaire, as well as nineteenth-century historians and philosophers, already approached, namely: *what does social development ultimately depend on?*

The ancients knew very well that, for instance, *eloquence* depends in considerable measure on society's mores and political structure (cf. *Dialogus de oratoribus*, which is attributed to Tacitus). Writers of the last century knew that just as well. As we have shown in our preceding essay, *Helvetius* often

addressed himself to the condition of society for an explanation of the origin of trends in aesthetic taste. In 1800 there appeared a book by Mme. de Staël-Holstein: *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*. During the Restoration and under Louis Philippe, Villemain Sainte-Beuve and many others declared for all to hear that *literary revolutions* arose only as a consequence of *social evolution*. On the other side of the Rhine, great philosophers, who regarded *literature* and the *fine arts*, like everything else, in the *process of becoming*, already held firm views—this despite all their idealism on the close link between any art and the social milieu that brings forth the artist.* Finally, to avoid an excess of examples, we shall only point out that Hippolyte Taine, that outstanding critic and historian of literature, advanced the following rule as the basic principle of his scientific aesthetics: “*The major changes that take place in the relations between people gradually produce the corresponding changes in people's thoughts*”. It might have been thought that this statement provided a complete solution of the question and clearly indicated the road of a scientific history of literature and the fine arts. Yet, strangely enough, we see that our present-day historians of literature do not have a clearer picture of mankind's spiritual development than was the case a hundred years ago. How is one to explain this amazing philosophical sterility in people who lack neither *diligence* nor, and especially, *learning*?

One does not have to seek far afield to discover the reason. However, to understand that reason, one must first establish wherein lie the merits and demerits of contemporary scientific aesthetics.

According to Taine, “it differs from the old aesthetics in its being of an historical, not dogmatic nature, i.e., in its stating laws, and not issuing instructions”. That is excellent, but how can such aesthetics give us guidance for a study of literature and various arts? How does it operate in the study of *laws*? How does it consider a work of art?

Here, we shall quote from the same writer and, to preclude any misunderstanding, we shall let him speak forth in detail.

* Pertinent in this respect, for example, is what Hegel says about Dutch painting: “Satisfaction with the existing way of life, which is also expressed even in the most ordinary and petty things, stems, with the Dutch, from their having been obliged to achieve, through great efforts that which other peoples receive from Nature directly and gratis.... On the other hand, they are a people of fishermen, sailors, townsmen and peasants; in consequence, they have known from the very outset the value of that which is necessary and useful in the biggest and smallest things, and have managed to achieve it through their zealous and diligent efforts”, etc. (*Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, hrsg. von H. G. Hotho, II, S. 222; cf. I, S. 217).

After stating that a *work of art is determined by the general state of minds and the predominant morals*, and citing historical examples, he goes on to say:

"In the various cases we have examined, you have noticed, first of all, a *general situation*, that is to say, the universal presence of certain boons and certain evils, a condition of servitude or of freedom, a state of poverty or wealth, a definite form of society, a definite brand of religion; in Greece, free cities, warlike and well provided with slaves; in the Middle Ages, oppression, incursions, feudal plunder, and an exalted Christianity; in the seventeenth century, life at court; the industrial and learned democracy of the nineteenth; in short, a sum of circumstances that men have to bow to, and obey.... This situation develops in them corresponding requirements, distinct aptitudes and particular sentiments.... Then this group of sentiments, requirements and aptitudes, when it manifests itself in its entirety and with brilliance in one and the same soul, produces a *predominant type*, i.e., a model that contemporaries admire and like: in Greece, this was the handsome and nude young man of fine race, accomplished in all bodily exercises; in the Middle Ages, the ecstatic monk and the enamoured knight; in the sixteenth century, the perfect courtier; in our days, a Faust or a Werther, insatiable and sad. But since this type is the most interesting, the most important and the most outstanding, as compared with all others, it is him that artists present to the public, now concentrating him in a single image when their art—as in painting, sculpture, the novel, the epic or the theatre—is imitative, now splitting him up into components when their art—such as architecture and music—evokes emotions without creating images. Therefore all their work can be expressed in saying that they either depict this predominant type or address themselves to him, as in the symphonies of Beethoven and in the rose-windows of cathedrals; they represent him in the Meleager and the antique Niobides, and in Racine's Agamemnon and Achilles. It follows that all *art depends upon him*, because art applies itself entirely to pleasing him or giving him expression. A general situation, which gives rise to distinct propensities and faculties; a predominant type created by the power of those propensities and faculties; sounds, forms, colours and words which make that type alive or are in accord with the propensities and faculties that go to make it up—such are the four terms of the series. The first brings in its train the second, which brings up the third, and the latter, the fourth, so that the least change in any of the terms of the series leads up to a corresponding alteration in those that follow and reveals a corresponding change in the preceding, permits a descent or an ascent, through pure reasoning, from one to the other. As far as I can

judge, this formula leaves nothing beyond the confines of its hold.”*

Actually, this “formula” does not cover very many important things. Certain remarks might be made on the arguments that accompany it. Thus, one might claim with good reason that the Middle Ages did not have only ecstatic monks and *enamoured knights*** in the capacity of “*predominant types*”. It might also be affirmed, with great probability, that “in our days”, it is not only Faust and Werther that inspire our artists. But, however that may be, it is obvious that Taine’s “formula” advances us considerably along the road towards an understanding of the history of art, and tells us far more than the vague definition that “literature is an expression of society”. In using this formula, Taine made an important contribution to the study of the history of the fine arts and literature. But, when reading his finest writings, such as his *Philosophie de l’art*, from which we have just quoted, his essay on Racine, and his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, one asks oneself: does all this satisfy? Of course, it does not! Despite all his talent and all the indisputable advantages of his method, the author gives us nothing but an *outline*, which, taken even as such, leaves much to be desired. His *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* is more of a series of brilliant characterisations than a history. What Taine tells us about ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy or the Netherlands acquaints us with the main features in the art of each of these countries, but explains nothing of their historical origins, or does so in a most inconsiderable degree. It should be noted, that, in this case, it is not the author who is at fault but his point of view, his understanding of the history of literature.

Inasmuch as it is claimed that the history of art is closely linked with that of the social milieu, and inasmuch as the opinion is expressed that any major change in men’s relations engenders a corresponding change in their ideas, the necessity is recognised of the need to first establish the laws of the evolution of the social milieu and gain a clear understanding of the causes of major changes in *men’s relations*, so as then to correctly establish the laws of the evolution of art. In short, “*historical aesthetics*” should be based on a *scientific understanding of the history of societies*. Has Taine done that in any satisfactory manner? No, he has not. A *materialist* in the field of the philosophy of art, he is an *idealist* in his understanding of history. “Just as astronomy is ultimately a problem of

* *Philosophie de l’art*, 5^e édition, Paris, 1890, t. I, pp. 116-19.

** Even if no mention is made here of folk art, the poetry of the peasants and petty burghers, it may well be said that the medieval warriors were not always “*enamoured knights*”. Thus the paladin in the celebrated song of Roland was “*enamoured*” only of his sword Durandal.

mechanics, and physiology a problem of chemistry, history is ultimately a problem of psychology",* he asserts. He regards the social milieu he is constantly appealing to as a product of the human spirit. Consequently, we find in him the same contradiction as we have met in the French eighteenth-century materialists: man's ideas owe their origin to man's condition; man's condition ultimately owes its origin to man's ideas. At this point, we shall ask the reader: can one use the *historical* method in aesthetics if one has such a confused and contradictory understanding of history in general? Of course not. One may possess extraordinary ability and yet be very far from accomplishing a task one has set oneself, if one makes do with an aesthetics which is only *semi-historical*.

The French eighteenth-century philosophers wanted to provide an explanation of the history of the arts and literature by addressing themselves to the properties of human nature. *Mankind* goes through the same phases of life as does the individual: childhood, youth, maturity and so on; the epic corresponds to childhood; eloquence and the drama to youth; philosophy to maturity, and so on.** In one of our preceding essays, we pointed out that such a comparison is quite groundless. It may also be added here that Taine's "historical" aesthetics in no way prevented him from making use of "human nature" as a key to all doors that failed to open for analysis at the first attempt. With Taine, however, the reference to human nature took another form. He did not speak of the phases in the evolution of the human individual; instead, he often—regrettably, only too often—spoke of *race*. "What is called race," he said, "is the inborn and hereditary dispositions that man brings into the world with himself."*** Nothing is easier, in shrugging off all difficulties, than to ascribe phenomena just a little more complex to the operation of such inborn and inherited dispositions. However historical aesthetics can only suffer great detriment therefrom.

Henry Sumner Maine was firmly convinced of the profound difference existing between the Aryan race and races of "other origins", in everything bearing upon social evolution. Neverthe-

* *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, 8^e édition, Introduction, p. XLV.

** This analogy was frequently used by Mme. de Staël: "In examining the three different epochs of Greek literature, one perceives very distinctly the natural advance of the human spirit. It was in the remote period of their history that the Greeks were above all illustrious for their poets. Homer characterises the first epoch of Greek literature; during the age of Pericles one sees the rapid progress of dramatic art, eloquence, morals and the beginnings of philosophy; in the times of Alexander, a deep study of the philosophical sciences became the main occupation of outstanding men of letters", etc. (op. cit. I, pp. 7-8). All this is true, but the "natural advance of the human spirit" in no way explains the *causes* of that advance.

*** *ibid.*, p. XXIII.

less, he expressed a noteworthy wish: "It is to be hoped that contemporary thought will before long make an effort to emancipate itself from those habits of levity in adopting theories of race which it seems to have contracted. Many of these theories appear to have little merit except the facility which they give for building on them inferences tremendously out of proportion to the mental labour which they cost the builder...." * One can only hope that this wish will be achieved as soon as possible. Unfortunately, that is not as simple as might seem at first glance. "Many," says Maine, "perhaps most, of the differences in kind alleged to exist between Aryan sub-races are really differences merely in degree of development...." This is beyond dispute. However, to no longer need the main key in the theory of race, one should evidently have a correct understanding of the features of the various stages of development. That is impossible without a contradiction-free understanding of history, an understanding Taine did not possess. But then, do many historians and critics possess it?

Lying before us is *Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur* by Dr. Hermann Kluge, a book which seems to be read fairly extensively in Germany, but presents nothing out of the ordinary as use-value. What is deserving of our attention therein is the periods into which the author divides the history of German literature. We find seven periods given in this book (pp. 7-8, 14th edition):

- 1) from the most ancient times down to Charlemagne (800 A. D.). In the main, this was an epoch of the ancient pagan folk songs, a period which saw the appearance of the ancient paladin legends;
- 2) from Charlemagne till the early twelfth century (800-1100 A. D.), a period in which the ancient national paganism yielded place to Christianity, this after a fierce struggle. Literature came mostly under the influence of the clergy;
- 3) the first outpouring of German literature (1100-1300 A. D.), when poetry was mostly cultivated by the knights;
- 4) the development of poetry by the estate of burghers and craftsmen (1300-1500 A. D.);
- 5) German literature during the Reformation (1500-1624 A. D.);
- 6) poetry under the control of the scholars; an epoch of imitation (1624-1748);
- 7) the second outpouring of German literature, commencing with 1748.

More competent than we are, the German reader can judge for himself as to the details of this division. To us it seems *absolutely eclectic*, i.e., based, not on a single principle, which is an essential condition of any scientific classification and division, but on sev-

* Henry Sumner Maine, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, 6th ed., pp. 96-97.

eral principles that are incommensurable with one another. In the first periods, literature, it is asserted, developed under the exclusive influence of *religious ideas*. Then came the third and the fourth periods, in which its development was determined by the *social structure*, the condition of the classes that "cultivated" it. From 1500, religious ideas returned as the main factor of literary evolution; the reformation set in. However, this hegemony of religious ideas lasted only 150 years: in 1624, the scholars took over the role of creators of German literature, etc. This division into periods is, to say the least, just as unsatisfactory as that used by Condorcet in his *Esquisse d'un tableau des progrès de l'esprit humain*. The reason is the same. Like Condorcet, Kluge does not know what social evolution and its effect—mankind's spiritual evolution—depend on. Thus, we were right in saying that our century has seen very modest progress in this field.

But let us return to Hippolyte Taine. To him, the "general situation" under whose influence a work of art arises means the general existence of certain boons and certain evils, a condition of freedom or servitude, a state of poverty or wealth, a definite form of society, and the definite brand of religion. But a condition of freedom or servitude, of wealth or poverty, and, finally, the form of society are all features denoting the actual position of men in "the social production of their existence". Religion is the fantastic form in which men's actual condition is reflected in their minds. The latter is a cause, and the former an effect. If one adheres to idealism, one may, of course, affirm the opposite, namely that men owe their actual condition to religious ideas, in which case what we accept only as an effect should be considered a cause. At all events, I hope, it will be agreed that cause and effect cannot be equated in characterising the "general situation" in any given epoch, since that would lead to utter confusion: men's *actual* condition would be constantly confounded with the general state of their morals and their spirit, or, in other words, an understanding of the expression "general situation" would be lost. This is exactly what happened with Taine as well as with a large number of historians of art.*

* Here, for instance, is what Charles Blanc says about Dutch painting: "To sum up, three major causes: national independence, democracy and Protestantism made their mark on the Dutch school. Once free of the Spanish yoke, the Seven Provinces now had their painting, which, in its turn, cast off the alien style ... the republican form, once recognised, liberated them from the purely decorative art, prescribed at the courts and by princes, from what one calls the painting of ostentation" ("peinture d'apparat").... "Finally, the family life which was fostered by Protestantism ... gave rise to innumerable and charming tableaux de genre, which made Batavian painting illustrious for all time, this because it was necessary to adorn the walls of their intimate dwellings, which had become sanctuaries of rarities." (*His-*

The materialist understanding of history finally relieves us of all these contradictions. True, it provides us with no magic formula, but it would be ridiculous to demand one to enable us at a moment's notice to solve all the problems in mankind's spiritual history; yet it leads us out of the vicious circle by indicating the correct road of scientific study for us to follow.

We are sure that many of our readers will be sincerely amazed to learn from us that, to Marx, the problem of history was, in a certain sense, a *psychological problem*, as well. Yet that is beyond dispute. Marx wrote as far back as 1845: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* or of *contemplation*, but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not *subjectively*. Hence it happened that the *active side*, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism—but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such."*

What is the meaning of these words, which, in certain measure, contain the programme of present-day materialism? It is that, if materialism does not wish to remain *one-sided*, as it has been till now; if it does not wish to eschew its own principle by constantly returning to the *idealistic* views; if it does not wish thereby to recognise that idealism is stronger in a definite area, it must provide a materialist explanation of all aspects of human life. The *subjective aspect* of that life means that very *psychological aspect*, "*the human spirit*", *men's sentiments and ideas*. To examine this aspect from the materialist point of view means, inasmuch as the reference is to a definite *species*, explaining the *history of ideas* through material conditions of the existence of people through *economic history*. Marx had to speak of a solution of a "*psychologi-*

toire des peintres de toutes les écoles, Paris, 1861, t. I, pp. 19-20). Hegel said something very similar: "In religion, the Dutch—and this is very important—were Protestants, and only Protestantism has the faculty of wholly invading the prose of life and endowing it, taken in itself, and irrespective of religious relations, with full significance, and allowing it to develop with unrestricted freedom." (*Aesthetik*, II, S. 222.) It would be simple to quote from Hegel himself to show that it would be far more logical to consider that it was not Protestantism that elevated the "prose of life" but, on the contrary, that it was the "prose of bourgeois life", after reaching a definite degree of development and strength, that engendered Protestantism in the process of its struggle against the "prose" or, if you please, the poetry of the feudal regime. If that is so, one should not see in Protestantism sufficient cause for the development of Dutch painting. One should go further, to something "tertiary" and "higher", which gave rise both to the Protestantism of the Dutch and their government (the "democracy" Charles Blanc speaks of), and also to their art, etc.

* See the Supplement to *Ludwig Feuerbach*, by F. Engels, "Marx on Feuerbach".⁴⁹

cal problem" all the more for his clearly seeing the vicious circle from which idealism, which was studying the problem, could not escape.

Thus Marx said almost the same as Taine did, only in *somewhat different words*. Let us see how Taine's "formula" should be modified in accordance with those different words.

A given degree of the development of the productive forces; men's relations in the process of social production, as determined by that degree of development; the form of society that expresses those relations; a definite state of the spirit and morals corresponding to that form of society; religion, philosophy, literature and art in accordance with the abilities, directions of taste, and the propensities engendered by that state—we do not wish to say that this "formula" embraces everything—not at all!—but we would say that it has the unquestionable advantage of being a better expression of the causal link between the various "terms of the series". As for the "narrowness" and "one-sidedness" that the materialist understanding of history is usually reproached with, the reader will not find any trace of them here.

In their time, the great German idealists, those sworn enemies of any eclecticism, considered that all aspects of a people's life are determined by a *single principle*. To Hegel, that principle was the *definiteness of the people's spirit*, "the overall imprint of its religion, the political system, its morality, its system of law, its morals, science, art, and also technical abilities". The materialists of today regard that people's spirit as an abstraction, a product of thought, which explains absolutely nothing. Marx overthrew the idealist understanding of history but that does not mean that he returned to the viewpoint of simple *interaction*, which explains still less than the viewpoint of the people's spirit does. His philosophy of history is also monist, but in a sense that is the diametrical opposite of Hegel's. It is as a consequence of its monist nature that eclectic minds see nothing but narrowness and one-sidedness in it.

The reader may have noticed that, in modifying Taine's formula according to the Marxist understanding of history, we have excluded what the French author has called the "*predominant type*". We have done that on purpose. The structure of civilised societies is so complex that, in the strict sense, one cannot even speak of a state of the spirit and morals that is in keeping with a given form of society. The state of the spirit and the morals of town-dwellers is often quite distinct from that of peasants, while the state of the spirit and morals of the nobility bears very little resemblance to that of the proletariat. That is why a "type" that is "predominant" in the perception of some particular class is in no way predominant as seen by another class: could a courtier of

the times of Le Roi-Soleil have served as an ideal for the French peasant of the same times? To this, Taine would no doubt have objected that it was not the peasants but rather aristocratic society that left an impress on eighteenth-century French literature and art. He would have been quite right. The historian of French literature of that century can regard the state of the peasants' spirit and morals une quantité négligeable. But let us take another epoch, for example, that of the Restoration. Was one and the same type "predominant" in the minds of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie of that period? Of course not. Out of contradiction to the adherents of the ancien régime, the bourgeoisie not only rejected the ideals of the aristocracy, but also idealised the spirit and the morals of the Empire, the epoch of the Napoleon it had utterly rejected only several years earlier.* Even before 1789, the bourgeoisie's opposition to the spirit and morals of the aristocracy manifested itself in the fine arts by the writing of *domestic dramas*. "What do the revolutions in Athens and Rome mean to me, a peaceable subject of a monarchist state in the eighteenth century? Can I find any true interest in the death of some Peloponnesian tyrant or the sacrifice of a young princess at Aulis? All this has nothing to do with me; no morals can move me," said Beaumarchais in his *Essais sur le genre dramatique sérieux*. What he says is so true that one asks oneself in surprise: how could the adherents of pseudo-classical tragedy have failed to see it? What "did they see in all this"? What moral did they find here? Yet the explanation is very simple. It was only for the *sake of appearance* that pseudo-classical tragedy depicted "Peloponnesian tyrants" and "Aulis princesses". In reality, it was, to quote from Taine, merely a refined depiction of the *aristocratic world*, whose admiration it evoked. The imminent world, that of the bourgeoisie, esteemed such tragedy only by tradition, or else rose up openly against it since it was also up in arms against the "*aristocratic world*" itself. The champions of the bourgeoisie saw in the rules of the old aesthetics something insulting to the dignity of the "*citizen*". "Should one depict people of the middle class as suffering or unfortunate? No, no,

* "Government officials, craftsmen and shopkeepers no doubt considered it their duty to have solemn faces and wear moustaches to display their liberalism. By their behaviour and certain details of costume they intended to show themselves as relics of our heroic army. The assistants at shops of fashion did not confine themselves to moustaches; to complete their metamorphosis, they attached spurs to their boots, which jingled martially along the roadways and pavements of the boulevards" (A. Perlet, *De l'influence des mœurs sur la comédie*, 2^e édition, Paris, 1848, pp. 51-52). Here we have an example of the influence of the class struggle in an area which, at first glance, might seem to depend only on whim. It would be interesting to study, in a special work, the history of vogue from the viewpoint of the psychology of classes.

they should be only ridiculed!" Beaumarchais exclaimed ironically in his "Lettre sur la critique du *Barbier de Seville*". "Ridiculous subjects and unfortunate kings—that is the only existing and only possible theatre. For my part, I have taken note of that."

The *citizens* who were Beaumarchais's contemporaries were, at least in most cases, descendants of the French *bourgeois* who, with an assiduity worthy of a better cause, had aped the *nobles* and had therefore been held up to ridicule by Molière, Dancourt, Regnard and many others. Thus, we see at least two substantially different epochs in the history of the spirit and morals of the French bourgeoisie: one of imitation of the nobility, and another of contradiction of the latter. Each of these epochs corresponded to a definite phase of the bourgeoisie's development. *The propensities and the trends in the tastes of any class consequently depend on the degree of its development and even more on its attitude to the superior class—an attitude which is determined by that development.*

That means that the class struggle plays an important part in the history of ideologies. Indeed, so important is that part that, with the exception of primitive societies in which no classes exist, it is impossible to understand the history of trends in the tastes and ideas of any society without an acquaintance with the class struggle taking place within it.

"It is not simply the immanent dialectics of speculative principle that are the very essence of the entire process of the development of modern philosophy," says Ueberweg, "but rather a struggle and an urge towards reconciliation, on the one hand, between traditional religious conviction, one deeply entrenched in the spirit and sentiments and, on the other hand, knowledge in the sphere of the natural sciences and the humanities achieved in modern studies."*

Were Ueberweg somewhat more attentive, he would realise that, at any given moment, speculative principles have themselves been the outcome of the struggle and the urge towards reconciliation that he speaks of. He should have gone further and asked himself the following questions: 1) have the traditional religious convictions not been the natural outcome of certain phases of social development? 2) have the discoveries in the field of the natural sciences and the humanities not sprung from the preceding phases of that evolution? 3) finally, was it not one and the same evolution, more rapid at some place or in some period of time, whilst elsewhere and in another period slower in rate and modified by a multitude of local conditions, that led both to the struggle between faiths and the new views acquired by modern thinking, and

* Ueberweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, hrsg. von Dr. Max Heinze, Berlin, 1880, 3. Teil, S. 174.

to the truce between the two forces waging that struggle, forces whose speculative principles translate the terms of that truce into the "divine language" of philosophy?

To view the history of philosophy from this angle means doing so from the materialist point of view. Though Ueberweg was a materialist, he did not seem to have had any idea of *dialectical* materialism, this despite all his learning. What he has given us is nothing else but what the historians of philosophy have already proposed—a simple succession of philosophical systems: a certain system has engendered another, the latter in its turn bringing forth a third system, and so on. However, any succession of philosophical systems is merely a *fact*, something *given*, to quote from present-day parlance, something that calls for explanation but cannot be explained by the "immanent dialectics of speculative principles". To people of the eighteenth century everything was accounted for by the activities of "legislators".* However, we already know that it has been caused by social development; can it be that we shall never be able to establish the link between the history of ideas and that of society, the history of the world of ideas and the world of reality?

"*The kind of philosophy a man chooses for himself depends on the kind of man he is,*" says Fichte. Cannot the same be said of any society or, more precisely, of any given social class? Are we not entitled to say with the same firm conviction: the philosophy of a society or social class depends upon what kind of society or class it is.

Of course, we should never forget that if the ideas predominant in any class at a given time are determined in *content* by the social position of that class, the *form* of those ideas is closely connected with those predominant during the previous epoch in the same class or a higher one. "*In all ideological domains tradition forms a great conservative force*" (Frederick Engels).

Let us take socialism as an example. "Modern socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand, of the anarchy existing in production. But, in its theoretical form, modern socialism originally appears ostensibly as a more logical extension of the principles laid down by the great French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Like every new theory, modern socialism had, at first, to connect itself

* "But why is it that letters have times of quietude, when minds are no longer productive, when nations seem to be exhausted by an excessive fertility? It is because despondency is often occasioned by imaginary errors, by the weakness of men in office..." (*Tableau des révolutions de la littérature ancienne et moderne*, par l'abbé de Cournand, Paris, 1786, p. 25).

with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in material economic facts.”*

The formal but decisive influence of an existent set of ideas does not make itself felt only in a positive sense, i.e., not only in the sense that, for instance, the French socialists of the first half of our century made reference to the very same principles, as the Enlighteners of the preceding century did; that influence also assumes a negative nature. If Fourier was engaged in a constant struggle against what he ironically called perfectible perfectibility, he did so because the doctrine of man's perfectibility played an important part in the Enlighteners' theories. If most of the French utopian socialists were on friendly terms with a merciful God, that sprang from an *opposition* to the bourgeoisie, whose youth was marked by considerable scepticism in this respect. If, however, the utopian socialists sang the praises of *political indifference*, the source was an opposition to the doctrine that “*everything depends on legislation*”. In short, both in the negative and the positive sense, the formal aspect of the doctrine of French socialism was equally determined by the theories of the Enlighteners, theories which we should in no way lose sight if we wish to understand the utopians correctly.

What was the link between the economic condition of the French bourgeoisie during the Restoration and the warlike appearance that the petty-bourgeois of the time, those knights of the tape measure, loved to assume? *No immediate link existed*; their beards and spurs in no way changed that condition either positively or negatively. However, as we already know, that amusing vogue was *indirectly* engendered by the bourgeoisie's status in respect of the aristocracy. *In the field of ideologies, many phenomena can be only explained indirectly by the influence of the economic advance*. This is very often forgotten, not only by the opponents but also by the supporters of Marx's historical theory.

Since the evolution of ideologies is determined, in essence, by economic development, these two processes always correspond to each other: “*public opinion*” adapts itself to the *economy*. That does not mean, however, that, in our study of the history of mankind, we have equal grounds to take as our point of departure either of these aspects—public opinion or the economy. While, in its general features, economic development can be sufficiently explained with the aid of its own logic, the road of spiritual evolution finds explanation only in the economy. A single example will make our idea clear.

During the times of *Bacon* and *Descartes*, philosophy displayed

* F. Engels, *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1877, S. 1.⁵⁰

great interest in the development of the productive forces. "... Instead of the speculative philosophy taught at schools," Descartes says, "one can find a practical philosophy, with the aid of which, given a knowledge of the force and the operations of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all the other bodies that surround us, just as distinct as our knowledge of the diverse crafts of our artisans, we might employ them in the same fashion for all the usages proper to them, thereby making ourselves masters and possessors of Nature."* All of Descartes's philosophy bears traces of this great interest. Thus the aim pursued by the studies of contemporary philosophers seemed to have been clearly defined. But a century passed and materialism which, we might add, is the logical consequence of Descartes's doctrine, became widespread in France; it was under its banner that the most progressive part of the bourgeoisie marched, and an ardent polemic flared up, but ... the productive forces were lost sight of: the materialist philosophers hardly ever spoke of them, for they now had quite different propensities, philosophy seemed to have set itself quite different tasks. What was the reason? Was it because France's productive forces had already achieved *sufficient development*? Had the French materialists come to *disregard* that mastery of man over Nature that Bacon and Descartes had dreamt of? Neither of these was the case! However, in Descartes's times, France's production relations—if we limit ourselves here to France alone—still fostered the development of the productive forces, while, a century later, they became a *hindrance* to them. They had to be destroyed, and, to that end, so had the ideas that hallowed them. All the energies of the materialists, that vanguard of the bourgeoisie's theorists, were focussed on this point, their entire doctrine assuming a militant character. The struggle against "*superstition*" and in the name of "*science*", and against "*tyranny*" and in the name of "*natural law*" became philosophy's most important and most practical (in the Cartesian sense) task; the immediate study of Nature with the aim of increasing the productive forces as rapidly as possible receded into the background. When the aim was achieved and the obsolete production relations had been destroyed, philosophical thought took a new direction, with materialism losing its importance for a long time to come. The development of philosophy in France was following in the footsteps of changes in her economy.

"Science, unlike other architects, builds not only castles in the air, but may construct separate habitable storeys of the building before laying the foundation stone".** This method may seem illogical but it finds justification in the *logic of social life*.

* Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, chap. VI.

** Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, S. 35.⁶¹

When the eighteenth-century "philosophers" recalled that man is a product of his social environment, they denied any influence whatsoever on that environment on the part of that very "public opinion" which, as they declared in other instances, *governs the world*. Their logic stumbled at every step against one or the other side of this antinomy, which was, however, solved with ease by dialectical materialism. Of course, to the dialectical materialists, human opinion governs the world, inasmuch as, according to Engels, "...all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will..."* But this does not contradict "public opinion" being rooted in the social environment and ultimately in the economic relations; neither does it contradict any given "public opinion" beginning to age as soon as the mode of production that has given rise to it becomes decrepit. It is the economy which shapes the "public opinion" that governs the world.

Helvetius, who attempted to analyse the "Spirit" from the materialist angle, met with failure because of the fundamental shortcoming in his method. To remain faithful to his principle that "man is nothing but sensation", Helvetius was obliged to assume that the most celebrated giants of the spirit and the most glorious heroes of self-sacrifice for the public weal, in just the same way as the most miserable sycophants and most unworthy egoists, were guided only by a desire for sensual pleasures. Diderot protested against this paradox, but could not escape from the conclusion arrived at by Helvetius; he found refuge only in the *realm of idealism*. However interesting Helvetius's attempt may have been, he nevertheless compromised the materialist understanding of the "Spirit" in the opinion of the general public and even of many "scholars". It is usually held that, in this question, the materialists can only repeat what has already been said by Helvetius. However, it is necessary merely to understand the "Spirit" of dialectical materialism to see that the latter is insured against the errors made by its *metaphysical* forerunner.

Dialectical materialism considers phenomena in their development. From the evolutionary point of view, however, it is just as absurd to say that people *consciously* adapt their ideas and their moral sentiments to their economic conditions as to assert that animals and plants consciously adapt their organs to the conditions of their existence. In both cases, we have an *unconscious* process, which has to be provided with a materialist explanation.

The following was said of "moral sentiment" by a man who was able to provide that explanation for the *origin of species*: "It may be well first to premise that I do not wish to maintain that any

* Ludwig Feuerbach, S. 57.⁵²

strictly social animal, if its intellectual faculties were to become as active and as highly developed as in man, would acquire exactly the same moral sense as ours. In the same manner as various animals have some sense of beauty, though they admire widely different objects, so they might have a sense of right and wrong, though led by it to follow widely different lines of conduct. If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless, the bee, or any other social animal, would gain in our supposed case, as it appears to me, some feeling of right or wrong, or a conscience. For each individual would have an inward sense of possessing certain stronger or more enduring instincts, and others less strong or enduring; so that there would often be a struggle as to which impulse should be followed; and satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or even misery would be felt, as past impressions were compared during their incessant passage through the mind. In this case an inward monitor would tell the animal that it would have been better to have followed the one impulse rather than the other. The one course ought to have been followed, and the other ought not; the one would have been right and the other wrong....”*

These lines evoked a great deal of censure of their author on the part of the “respectable” public. Thus a certain Mr. Sidgwick wrote in the *London Academy* that “a superior bee, we may feel sure, would aspire to a milder solution of the population question....” We are prepared to admit this in respect of the bee but certain books on economy which are held in high esteem by “respectable” people testify to the British bourgeoisie, and not only the British, having failed to find a “milder” solution of this question. In June 1848 and in May 1871,⁸³ the French bourgeois were not at all as mild as the “superior bee”. The bourgeois murdered and ordered the murdering of their worker “brothers” with unparalleled brutality and—and this is of even greater interest to us—without any qualms of conscience. No doubt they told themselves that they were obliged to follow this particular “road” and “no other”. Why was that so? It was because the bourgeoisie’s morality was prescribed to them by their social position, their struggle against the proletarians, in the same way as animals’ “line of conduct” is dictated to them by their conditions of existence.

The selfsame French bourgeois consider the slavery of antiquity immoral, and probably condemn the massacre of rebel slaves practised in ancient Rome as unworthy of civilised people and even of

*¹*The Descent of Man*, London, 1883, pp. 99-100.

mind-endowed bees. The bourgeois comme il faut is quite "moral" and devoted to the common weal; in his understanding of morality and the common weal, he will never cross the borderline prescribed to him, *irrespective of his will and consciousness, by the material conditions of his existence*. In this respect, he differs in no way from members of other classes. In reflecting, in his ideas and sentiments, the material conditions of his existence, he merely shares the common fate of all "mortals".

"Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations. The single individual, who derives them through tradition and upbringing, may imagine that they form the real motives and the starting-point of his activity...."*

Jean Jaurès recently attempted to "radically reconcile economic materialism and idealism in their application to historical development".** This outstanding orator came out somewhat belatedly, since the Marxist understanding of history leaves no room for "reconciliation" in this field. Marx never turned a blind eye to moral sentiments, which have a part to play in history; he only explained the *origin of those sentiments*. For Jaurès to gain a better understanding of the meaning of what he prefers to call "Marx's formula" (and Marx always ridiculed formula-ridden people), we shall quote for him yet another passage from the book we have just cited from.

The reference is to the "Democratic-Socialist" party, which arose in France in 1849.

"The peculiar character of the Social-Democracy is epitomised in the fact that democratic-republican institutions are demanded as a means, not of doing away with two extremes, capital and wage labour, but of weakening their antagonism and transforming it into harmony. However different the means proposed for the attainment of this end may be, however much it may be trimmed with more or less revolutionary notions, the content remains the same. This content is the transformation of society in a democratic way, but a transformation within the bounds of the petty bourgeoisie. Only one must not form the narrow-minded notion that the petty bourgeoisie, on principle, wishes to enforce an egoistic class interest. Rather, it believes that the *special* conditions of its emancipation are the *general* conditions within the frame of which alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided.

* Karl Marx, *Der 18. Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, S. 26.⁶⁴

** See his paper on the idealist understanding of history (*Neue Zeit*, XIII, 2, S. 545 ff.).

Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position, they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the *political* and *literary representatives* of a class, and the class they represent." (Ibid. p. 29).⁵⁵

The superiority of the dialectical method of Marx's materialism is most distinctly to be seen where it is a matter of providing a solution of problems of a "moral" nature, which nonplussed eighteenth-century materialism. However, a correct understanding of that solution calls, first and foremost, for *metaphysical prejudices* to be cast off.

Jaurès had no grounds to assert the following: "I do not wish to place the materialist understanding on one side of the partition, and the idealist on the other"; he returns to the selfsame system of "partitions": he places the spirit on one side, and on the other matter; here we have economic necessity, and there moral sentiments, and then he goes on to catechise them both, attempting to prove that they must permeate each other, just as "in man's organic life the mechanism of the brain and the conscious will penetrate each other".*

But Jaurès is not just another man. He possesses great knowledge, good will and outstanding abilities. You read him with enjoyment (we have never had the pleasure of hearing him speak), even when he is in error. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of many opponents of Marx, who vie with one another in attacking him.

Herr Doktor Paul Barth, author of the book *Die Geschichtsphilosophie Hegel's und der Hegelianer bis auf Marx und Hartmann*,

* The reader who is curious enough to learn how economic necessity permeates the "idea of justice and law" will have great pleasure in reading an article by Paul Lafargue "Recherches sur les origines de l'idée du bien et du juste" published in No. 6 of *Revue philosophique*, 1885. We do not understand with full clarity what is meant by the permeation of economic necessity by the idea named above. If thereby Jaurès understands that we must try to reorganise the economic relations in bourgeois society in keeping with our moral sentiments, we shall reply as follows: 1) That is self-understood, but it is hard to find in history any party which set as its task the triumph of that which, in its own opinion, contradicted its "idea of right and good". 2) He does not clearly realise the meaning of the words he uses; he speaks of morals which, as Taine puts it, *issue directions*, while the Marxists try to *state laws* in what can be called their moral doctrine. In these conditions, a misunderstanding is quite inevitable.

Leipzig, 1890, has understood Marx so little that he has been able to refute him. He has proved that the author of *Capital* contradicts himself at every step. Let us take a closer look at his method of reasoning. "In respect of the end of the Middle Ages, Marx himself has provided material for his refutation in declaring (*Kapital*, B. I., S. 737-50⁶⁶) that one of the main causes of the primitive 'accumulation' of capital was the expropriation of the English peasants from the land by the feudal lords who, in view of the rising prices of wool, turned their arable land into pastures for their sheep, with very few shepherds, the 'enclosures', and turned those peasants into free proletarians who placed themselves at the disposal of the developing manufactures. Although, according to Marx, this agrarian revolution was caused by the rise of wool manufacture, the feudal forces, as he has himself depicted it, those landlords so eager for profits, were its forcible influence (*Kapital*, B. I, S. 747), i.e., political force became a link in the chain of economic upheavals."^{*}

As we have often had occasion to say, the eighteenth-century philosophers were convinced that "*everything depends on legislation*". But when it was recalled, in the early years of the present century, that the legislator, who was thought to be capable of "everything" was, in his turn, a product of the social environment, when it was understood that any country's "legislation" is rooted in its social structure, the trend to fall into the opposite extreme began frequently to appear: the role of the legislator, which had previously been overestimated, was now often *underestimated*. Thus, for instance, Jean-Baptiste Say wrote in the Introduction to his *Traité d'économie politique*: "For a long time, *politics* in the proper sense of the term, the science of the *organisation* of societies, was confused with *political economy*, which teaches how the wealth that meets the needs of society arises, is distributed and is used. Yet wealth is essentially *independent* of the political *organisation*. Under any form of government, the State can prosper if it is well administered. One has seen nations become rich under *absolute* monarchs: one has seen them ruined under *national assemblies*. If political freedom proves more favourable to the development of wealth, it is so indirectly, in the same way as it is more favourable to education." The utopian socialists went even further, proclaiming from the house tops that the reformer of social organisation has nothing in common with politics.^{**} What these two

^{*} op. cit., pp. 49-50.

^{**} "In our civilised world, we have every possible forms of government. But are Western countries, which lean more or less towards the *democratic* form of state, less afflicted by spiritual, moral and material poverty than Oriental countries, which have a more or less *autocratic* form of rule? Or did the Prussian monarch take less closely to heart the plight of the poorer classes

extremes have in common is that they both spring from a failure to properly understand the link between a country's social and political organisation. Marx discovered that connection, so that it was easy for him to show how and why any class struggle is at the same time a political struggle.

The ingenious Doktor Barth saw only one thing in all this, i.e., that, according to Marx, a political act, one of "legislation", could have no effect on economic relations; that, in the opinion of that selfsame Marx, any such act was merely a semblance, so that any English peasant forcibly deprived of his land by the landlord at the "end of the Middle Ages", i.e., stripped of his former *economic* position upset, like a house of cards, the entire historical theory of the celebrated socialist. Voltaire's bachelor of arts from Salamanca could not have displayed greater ingenuity! ⁵⁷

And so, Marx contradicts himself in his description of the "clearing of estates" in England. An excellent logician, Herr Barth makes use of that clearing to prove that law "*has an independent existence*". But since the *aim* of the *juridical* action by the English landlords had very little in common with their *economic* interests, the esteemed Herr Doktor has voiced an assertion that is indeed free of any one-sidedness: "Thus, law has an existence of its own, though not an independent one." An existence of its own, though not an independent one, forsooth! This is a many-sided statement and, what is still more important, protects our Herr Doktor from all kinds of "contradictions". If one sets out to prove to him that *law* hinges on the *economy*, he will reply: that is because it is not sovereign. If one tells him that the economy is determined by law, he will exclaim that that is exactly what he is out to say in his theory of the independent existence of law.

Our ingenious Herr Doktor says the same thing about morals, religion and all other ideologies. Without exception, they all stand on their own legs though they are not independent. As you see, this is the old but always new story of the struggle between eclecticism and monism, the same story about "partitions": here we have *matter*, and there *spirit*—two substances with an existence of their own, though one that is not independent.

But let us leave eclectics and return to Marx's theory, about which we have several more remarks to make.

Savage tribes already have relations—peaceable or non-peaceable—between themselves and, should the opportunity arise, with

of the people than did the French Chamber of Deputies or the king of the French? The facts *prove* the opposite to us with such force and thought *convince* us of the opposite so much that we are more than indifferent to all politically liberal strivings, which have simply become repulsive to us" (M. Hess in *Gesellschaftsspiegel*, 1846).

barbarian peoples and with civilised States. These relations naturally exert an influence on the economic structure of any society. "Different communities find different means of production, and different means of subsistence in their natural environment. Hence, their modes of production, and of living, and their products are different. It is this spontaneously developed difference which, when different communities come in contact, calls forth the mutual exchange of products, and the consequent gradual conversion of those products into commodities."* The development of commodity production leads to the disintegration of the primitive community. Within the clan there arise new interests, which ultimately engender a new political organisation; the class struggle begins, with all its inevitable consequences in the sphere of mankind's political, moral and intellectual evolution. Its international relations become ever more complex and give rise to phenomena which at first glance seem to contradict Marx's historical theory.

In Russia, Peter the Great brought about a revolution which exerted a tremendous influence on that country's economic development. However, it was not economic needs but those of a political nature, the requirements of the *State*, which induced that man of genius to take revolutionary measures. In the same way, it was Russia's defeat in the Crimean War⁵⁹ that forced Alexander II's government to do everything it could for the development of Russian capitalism. History teems with such examples, which seem to testify in favour of the independent existence of international, civil and any other kind of law. But let us take a closer look at the matter.

Wherein lay the strength of those West-European States which awakened the genius of the great Muscovite? *It lay in the development of their productive forces.* Peter understood that very well, since he bent every effort to speed up the development of those forces in his country. Where did the means he used come from? How did that power of an Asiatic despot arise, which he used with such fearful energy? That authority owed its origin to the *economy* of Russia; those means were restricted by the production relations in Russia at the time. Despite his awesome authority and his iron will, Peter did not and could not succeed in turning St. Petersburg into an Amsterdam, or in making Russia a naval power, which was his unswerving ambition. Peter the Great's reforms gave rise to an original phenomenon in Russia. He tried to implant European manufactures in Russia, which did not have the workers, so he used the labour of *state serfs* there. *Industrial serfdom*, a form unknown in Western Europe, existed in Russia until 1861, i.e., until the abolition of serfdom.

* *Das Kapital*, I, S. 353.⁵⁸

No less characteristic an example was the serf condition of the peasants in East Prussia, Brandenburg, Pomerania and Silesia, beginning with the mid-sixteenth century. The development of capitalism in the Western countries *was* constantly *undermining* the feudal forms of the exploitation of the tiller of the soil. It was only in this part of Europe that capitalist development preserved those forms for a fairly lengthy period of time.

Slavery in the European colonies is also, at first glance, a paradoxical example of capitalist development. This phenomenon, like those mentioned above, cannot be explained by the logic of economic life in the countries it was to be met in. The explanation is to be sought in *international economic relations*.

Thus we have, in our turn, returned to the *standpoint of interaction*; it would be stupid to forget that this is not only a legitimate but an absolutely essential point of view. It would, however, be equally absurd to forget that this standpoint does not *of itself* explain anything, and that, in using it, we should always seek a "third", the "very highest", that which *Notion was to Hegel, and to us the economic condition of peoples and countries whose mutual influence must be established and understood*.

In any civilised country, literature and the fine arts exert a more or less considerable influence on the literature and the fine arts of other civilised countries. *This mutual influence is a result of similarity in such countries' social structures*.

A class that is struggling against an enemy gains a definite position in its country's literature. If the same class in another country comes into motion, it absorbs the ideas and forms created by its more advanced counterpart. *However, it modifies them or goes farther than they do, or else lags behind them, this depending on the difference in its own condition and that of the class that provides it with a model*.

We have already seen that the *geographical environment* has had an important influence on the historical development of peoples. We now know that *international relations* perhaps have an even greater influence on that development. The joint influence of the geographical environment and international relations explains the vast difference we find in the historical fates of peoples, *although the fundamental laws of social evolution are everywhere the same*. So we see that the Marxist understanding of history, far from being "limited" and "one-sided", opens up a vast field of research to us. Very much hard work, patience and love of the truth are needed to properly cultivate even a very small part of that field, which, however, belongs to us; the acquisition has been made, the work has been begun by matchless craftsmen, and it only remains for us to carry on the good work. *And we must do that*

if we do not wish to convert, in our minds, Marx's masterly idea into something "drab", "gloomy", and "deadening".

"When thinking remains standing at the *generality* of Ideas," as Hegel puts it so very well, "as is of necessity the case in the first philosophies (for example, in the Being of the Eleatic school, in Heraclitus's Becoming, etc.) it is justly reproached with *formalism*. It may happen that in a *more* developed philosophy, too, only abstract propositions and definitions are conceived, and only they are repeated; that, for example, everything is oneness in the Absolute, that the subjective and the objective are identical, in any consideration of the particular."* We could with good reason be reproached with such *formalism* if, in respect of any given society, we merely repeated that *the anatomy of that society is rooted in its economy*. That is indisputable, but it is insufficient; a scientific idea must be put to scientific use; one must be aware of all these vital functions of that organism, whose anatomical structure is determined by the economy; one must understand how it moves and is nourished, how the *sensations* and *concepts* that arise in it *thanks to that anatomical structure* become what they are; how they change together with the changes that occur in that structure, and so on. It is only on that condition that we can make progress, and it is only by observing that condition that we can be confident of it.

People often see in the materialist understanding of history a doctrine which proclaims man's subordination to the yoke of a remorseless and blind necessity. Nothing could be more false than that idea! It is the materialist understanding of history that shows people the way that will lead them *from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom*.

In the field of morality, the philistine—that eclectic *par excellence*—always proves to be an "*idealist*". The more stubbornly he clutches at his "ideal", the more helpless his mind feels against the *drab prose of social life*. That mind will never triumph over economic necessity; that ideal will always remain an ideal; it will never come true, since it has "*an existence of its own but one that is not independent*", because it is incapable of emerging from behind its "*partition*". On one side we have spirit, the ideal, human dignity, fraternity and the like; on the other, matter, economic necessity, exploitation, rivalry, crises, bankruptcies, and universal and mutual deception. Reconciliation between these two realms is impossible. The present-day materialists *can regard such "moral idealism" with nothing but contempt*. They have a far loftier idea of the power of human reason. True, the latter advances in its development thanks to economic necessity, but *that is exactly*

* *Encyklopädie*, I. Teil, § 12, Einleitung.

why what is genuinely reasonable should not always remain in the condition of an "ideal". *What is reasonable becomes actual*, and the achievement of that purpose is assumed by the irresistible force of economic necessity.

The eighteenth-century "philosophers" repeated ad nauseam that the world is governed by public opinion, which is why nothing can stand opposed to Reason, which is "ultimately always right". Nevertheless, those same philosophers often expressed *considerable doubt about the force of Reason*, such doubt logically springing from another aspect of a theory characteristic of those "philosophers". Since everything depends on the "*legislator*", the latter either allows Reason to triumph, or else extinguishes its torch. Therefore, anything is to be expected of the "*legislator*". In most cases, the legislators and the monarchs who control the destinies of their peoples show very little concern for the triumph of Reason. Thus, the latter's prospects have become infinitesimal! It only remains for the philosopher to rely on *chance*, which sooner or later will place power in the hands of a "*sovereign who is well disposed towards Reason*". We already know that Helvetius actually counted on some fortunate chance alone. Let us see what another philosopher of the same epoch has to say on the matter.

"The most obvious principles are often the most contested; they have to combat ignorance, credulity, stubbornness, custom and vanity in people, in a word, the interests of the great and the stupidity of the people which make them remain attached to their old systems. Error defends its territory inch by inch, and it is only with the aid of struggle and perseverance that one can tear the least of its conquests away from it. Let us not think for that reason that the truth is useless: once sown its seed lives on, it will yield fruit with time, and like seeds which, before emerging, lie buried in the earth for a long time, it awaits the circumstances which will let it develop.... It is when enlightened sovereigns govern nations that truth yields the fruits one is entitled to expect of it. It is ultimately when nations are tired of the poverty and innumerable calamities that their errors have engendered that necessity makes them resort to truth, which alone can protect them against the misfortunes that deception and prejudice have made them suffer so long."*

Here we have the same faith in "*enlightened sovereigns*" and the same doubt about the power of "Reason"! Compare with these barren and timid hopes the unshakeable conviction shown by Marx, who says that there neither is, nor will there ever be a monarch

* *Essais sur les préjugés, de l'influence des opinions sur les mœurs et sur le bonheur des hommes etc.*, Liège, 1797, p. 37. This book is ascribed to Holbach or to the materialist Dumarsais, whose name stands on the title sheet.

capable of effectively preventing the development of his people's productive forces and consequently *its liberation from the yoke of obsolete institutions*, and then tell me who has greater faith in the power of Reason and its ultimate triumph? On one hand, we have a cautious "*perhaps*"; on the other, *a confidence* that is as unshakeable as that given us by mathematical proofs.

The materialists could only harbour a half-belief in their god — "Reason", since, in their theory, that god was constantly coming up against the iron laws of the material world, blind *necessity*. "Man reaches his end", says Holbach, "without being free for a single moment, beginning with his birth and ending with his death."* The materialist has to make this assertion since, according to Priestley, "the doctrine of necessity... is the immediate result of the doctrine of materiality of man; for mechanism is the undoubted consequence of materialism."** But until it was learnt that this *necessity* could give rise to man's *freedom*, one could not but be a fatalist. "All events are connected among themselves," says Helvetius. "A forest felled in the North changes the direction of the winds, the state of the crops, the arts in a country, its mores and government". Holbach speaks of the incalculable consequences that the movement of a single atom in a despot's mind can have for a country's fate. The determinism of the "philosophers" went no further in the understanding of the role of necessity in history, which is why, to them, historical development was also subordinate to *chance*, that coin which served as *necessity's* small change. Freedom remained something opposed to necessity, while materialism, as Marx pointed out, was incapable of understanding *human activity*. The German idealists very clearly saw this weak side of metaphysical materialism but it was only with the aid of the Absolute Spirit, i.e., with the aid of a fiction, that they were able to join freedom and necessity together. The contemporary materialists of the Moleschott type are caught up in the contradictions of the eighteenth-century materialists. It was Marx alone, who, in his consideration of "*human practice*", was able to reconcile "Reason" and "necessity", without for a moment rejecting the theory of "*man's materiality*". Mankind "*sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.*"***

The metaphysical materialists saw necessity subordinating people to itself ("a forest felled...", etc.); dialectical materialism shows how necessity will free them.

* *Le bon sens puisé dans la nature*, I, p. 120.

** Priestley, *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism*, etc., p. 241.

*** *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, Vorwort, S. VI.⁶⁰

"The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence—but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation."*

Though allegedly fatalistic, Marx's theory is one that, for the first time in the history of economic science, put an end to the *fetishism* of the economists, according to which they explained economic categories—exchange-value, money and capital—by the nature of material objects, and not by the nature of relations among people in the process of production.**

We cannot here set forth what Marx did for political economy, but shall only note that, in this science, he used the same method, and, in dealing with political economy, he adopted the same standpoint as in his explanation of history—that of the relations of people in the process of production. Therefore, one can form a judgement of the intellectual level of those people—so numerous in present-day Russia—who "*recognise*" Marx's economic theory but "*reject*" his historical views.

Anyone who has understood what the *dialectical method* of Marx's materialism means can also form a judgement of the scientific significance of arguments that appear from time to time as to which method Marx used in his *Capital*—the *inductive* or the *deductive*.

* *ibid.*, S. VI.⁶¹

** "To what extent some economists are misled by the Fetishism inherent in commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labour, is shown, amongst other ways, by the dull and tedious quarrel over the part played by Nature in the formation of exchange-values. Since exchange-value is a definite social manner of expressing the amount of labour bestowed upon an object, Nature has no more to do with it, than it has in fixing the course of exchange.

"The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production. It therefore makes its appearance at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as now-a-days. Hence its Fetish character is comparatively easy to be seen through. But when we come to more concrete forms, even this appearance of simplicity vanishes. Whence arose the illusions of the monetary system? To it gold and silver, when serving as money, did not represent a social relation between producers, but were natural objects with strange social properties. And modern economy, which looks down with such disdain on the monetary system, does not its superstition come out as clear as noon-day, whenever it treats of capital? How long is it since economy discarded the physiocratic illusion, that rents grow out of the soil and not out of society?" (*Das Kapital*, I, S. 52-53).⁶²

Marx's method is *simultaneously* both inductive and deductive. Moreover, it is the most revolutionary of all the methods ever used.

"In its mystified form," says Marx, "dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."*

Holbach, one of the most revolutionary representatives of French philosophy of the last century, was frightened by the drive for markets, without which the modern bourgeoisie cannot exist. He would willingly have checked historical development in this direction. Marx welcomed that drive for markets, that eagerness for profits, as a force destructive to the existing order of things and as a preliminary condition of mankind's emancipation.

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face, with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

"The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed

* *Das Kapital*, I, 3. Aufl., Vorwort zur 2. Aufl., S. XI X.⁶³

or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property.

"National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature...."*

In rebelling against *feudal property*, the French materialists sang the praise of *bourgeois property*, which they held to be the innermost soul of any human society. They saw only one aspect of the question, considering bourgeois property the fruit of the labours of the proprietor himself. Marx shows what the immanent dialectic of bourgeois property leads up to:

"The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, i.e., that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage-labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence.... But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths."**

However revolutionary the French materialists were, they appealed only to the *enlightened bourgeoisie* and to the "*philosophising*" nobles who had gone over to the camp of the bourgeoisie. They had a stark fear of the "rabble", the "people", the "*ignorant mob*". But the bourgeoisie was and could be *only semi-revolutionary*. Marx addressed himself to the *proletariat*, a class that is revolutionary in the full sense of the word.

"All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become

* *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Ch. I.⁶⁴

** *Communist Manifesto*, Ch. II.⁶⁵ The law of wages that Marx speaks of here is more precisely formulated in *Capital*, where he shows that it is actually even more unfavourable to the proletarian. However, what the *Manifesto* says, is enough to destroy the illusion the nineteenth century inherited from its predecessor, or rather predecessors.

masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.”*

In their struggle against the then existing social system, the materialists were constantly appealing to the “mighty of this world”, to “*enlightened sovereigns*”. They tried to show the latter that their theories were quite innocuous in essence. Marx and Marxists hold a different stand in respect of “*the mighty of this world*”.

“The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.”**

It is quite obvious that such a doctrine could not meet with a favourable reception from the “mighty of this world”. The bourgeoisie of today has become a reactionary class: it is out to “*turn back the wheel of history*”. Its ideologists are incapable of even *understanding* the tremendous scientific importance of Marx’s discoveries. But then, it is the proletariat that uses his historical theory as the best guide in its struggle for emancipation.

This theory, which frightens the bourgeoisie with its alleged fatalism, instils boundless energy into the proletariat. In defending the “doctrine of necessity” against attack by Price, Dr. Priestley, among other things, said the following: “To say nothing of myself, who certainly, however, am not the most torpid and lifeless of all animals; where will he find greater ardour of mind, a stronger and more unremitted exertion, or a more strenuous and steady pursuit of the most important objects, than among those of whom he knows to be necessarians?”***

Priestley was speaking of his contemporary English “Christian necessarians”,⁶⁸ to whom he could ascribe that kind of ardour with or without good grounds. But talk a little to Messrs. Bismarck, Caprivi, Crispi or Casimir Périér, and they will tell you marvels about the activities and exertions of the “necessarians” and “fatalists” of our times—the *Social-Democratic workers*.

* *Communist Manifesto*, Ch. I.⁶⁶

** *ibid.*, Ch. IV.⁶⁷

*** *Dr. Priestley*, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

A FEW WORDS IN DEFENCE OF ECONOMIC MATERIALISM

(An Open Letter to V. A. Goltsev)

Sir:

Your article on "economic"* materialism was published in the April issue of *Russkaya Mysl*.⁶⁹ This article will probably give rise to a lengthy and lively discussion among the finer part of our reading public. Since the Editorial Board of *Russkaya Mysl* no doubt hold nothing higher than the interests of the truth, I feel sure that they will not refuse to publish several objections to your article by one who also sets much store by the truth.

Your article can be divided into two parts. In one of them, you give a general theoretical appraisal of the doctrine of the "economic" materialists; in the other, you consider that doctrine in its application to our Russian conditions. I must confess, Sir, that I find your theoretical criticism of "economic" materialism somewhat infelicitous. The objections you have raised to it have often been replied to by its adherents. Had you read with somewhat greater attentiveness, for example, Beltov's book *The Development of the Monist View of History*,⁷⁰ you would not have raised many of your objections because you would have found a fairly full reply to them in that book.

Your article is, in my opinion, interesting and even outstanding, but it is so not in its criticism of economic materialism but in the way you have posed several of our practical problems, as a result of which the bitter controversy which has for several years agitated our reading public can be brought considerably closer to an end. I would willingly have limited myself, in this letter, to the latter aspect of the question, the practical one, but I am afraid that my views will be wrongly interpreted unless certain remarks of a general nature are added, which is why I shall begin with those general remarks.

You hold that it is impossible to "deduce the totality of cultural and historical life from production relations alone". You

* It would be more correct to say *dialectical* materialism, but I would not like to enter into a terminological argument here.

"recognise the mentality factor in historical development as an independent one". Therein lies your "main objection" to economic materialism.

Let us dwell a little on that main objection.

You refer to Fustel de Coulanges, in whose opinion it was the early religion of the Greeks and the Romans that established their family life, marriage and paternal authority, determined degrees of kinship, and hallowed property and inheritance rights.⁷¹ I am familiar with this view of Fustel de Coulanges, but I think that it is wholly mistaken and contradicts the most incontrovertible conclusions arrived at by current historical science. I am not alone in thinking so.

When the seventh edition of the book you have quoted from by Fustel de Coulanges was brought out in Paris in 1879, Professor Oort of the University of Leyden published an interesting objection to it in the journal *Teologische Tijdschrift*. Oort rejected as totally erroneous the idea that family life in antiquity was determined by early religious beliefs. The reverse is true. "When family life came into being, religion gave it its sanction." It was the same in the realm of state life: "religion hallowed and maintained the status quo." Finally, the same is to be seen in private law: here, too, religious thinking gave its sanction to institutions which had in no way arisen under its influence. Oort noted, in passing, that, in the same research, Fustel de Coulanges had been obliged to modify his basic proposition: he acknowledged that the revolutions which had destroyed the civil community of antiquity had been caused, not by the development of pagan religious thinking but by the operation of causes extraneous to that thinking, mainly by the *struggle of material interests* (the class struggle, I would call it) within antique society. That is quite true, as will be borne out by any re-reading of Book Four of the selfsame work by Fustel de Coulanges, one of the first pages of which you quote from, Sir, in your article. True, Fustel de Coulanges, who attributed to the class struggle a very important role in the internal history of Greece and Rome, attempted to prove that the contending classes themselves owed their origins to the early religions of those countries. But it is this very attempt which shows with the utmost clarity how incomplete and erroneous were the views held by this student of history (who was most serious in other respects) on the development of primitive institutions in the world of antiquity. If, Sir, you would like to verify my words, I would ask you to compare Book Four in *Cité antique* with the appropriate chapters in Morgan's *Ancient Society*, or at least in Letourneau's *L'Évolution de la propriété*.

Oort's article was translated into French and published in the Paris journal *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (II-ème année,

tome III), with favourable editorial comment. If I am not mistaken, Sir, this circumstance will go to show that the view held by Fustel de Coulanges, which you have cited, is not shared by many experts in the history of religions.

Indeed, how could the experts share that view? To whom would it now occur to call *primordial* the Greek and Roman religions that Fustel de Coulanges referred to? These allegedly primordial religions had a long history of their own, which cannot be understood even approximately unless we abandon Fustel de Coulanges's basic view and regard antique religion as an outcome of the internal development of antique societies.

In general, it will be no exaggeration to say that hardly any serious historian would now agree with Fustel de Coulanges's view without most decisive and substantial reservations.

For instance, I have before me a well-known work by Victor Duruy: *Histoire des Romains*, on page 76 of which, in Volume I (published in 1877), I find the following words:

"Prior to the invasion of Greek and Oriental ideas, religion (in ancient Italy) was simple, and based on daily needs, on tilling the soil, and on impressions of wonder or fear evoked by that beautiful and changeable Nature. It was an essentially rural religion.* The gods of Italy were guardians of property, of conjugal fidelity and justice, protectors of agriculture, dispensers of all earthly blessings, masters of the acts of men," etc.**

* Duruy pointed out in a note that the old Roman Calendar knew no other festivals than those connected with the tilling of the soil.

** (The same view regarding the "primordial" religion of the Romans is also to be met in Tiele, whose knowledge of the history of religion was outstanding: "La religion des plus anciens habitants de Rome était encore celle des pâtres et des paysans..." (*Manuel de l'histoire des religions* traduit du hollandais par Maurice Vernes, Paris, 1880, p. 256). [The religion of the most ancient inhabitants of Rome was still one of shepherds and peasants....])

Roman religion shows with the utmost clarity how and in what degree, "early" religion was a reflection of the activities and needs of "early" men. "Non seulement chaque circonstance de la vie sociale," said Tiele, "mais aussi chaque opération agricole, labourage, semailles, récolte, jusqu'à l'ouverture des greniers ... avaient des représentants particuliers ... dans le monde des esprits" (i.e., p. 252). [Not only every circumstance of social life, but also every agricultural operation, tillage, sowing, harvesting and right down to the opening of granaries ... had their special representatives ... in the world of spirits.]

Even copper money in Rome had its own god ("genius"), who was called *Aesculanus*. When silver money was introduced in about the middle of the third century before the Christian era, the old genius of copper money was soon provided with a son, *Argentinus* (Tiele, *ibid.*, p. 253). But, I repeat, the Roman people's "early" religion was in no way "primordial" in the cultural and historical meaning of the word. The *earliest* religion, in the latter sense, was the *animism* of primitive tribes of hunters and exerted no influence on men's social behaviour, for the simple reason that it had no connection with social morals (regarding this see Edward B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, London,

Permit me to ask you, Sir, whether Duruy's view resembles that of Fustel de Coulanges? Which view would you consider more correct? Did agriculture and the concomitant daily needs and forms of life as existing among the ancient inhabitants of Italy appear as a result of their "early" religion, which was "essentially rural", or, on the contrary, was that early religion, "essentially rural", an outcome of an agricultural way of life? It would seem that merely asking that question would at once provide the answer, leaving no room for doubt. After all, if religion had conditioned the social life of Italy's ancient inhabitants, it would be quite incomprehensible why that religion was agricultural, and of no other kind. Or perhaps, you think that took place because of specific laws in the "independent" development of pagan religious thinking?

True, in Duruy's opinion, the pagan gods of ancient Italy were guardians, not only of agriculture but also of property, the family, conjugal fidelity, and justice. Therefore, one can say—one can say anything, Sir—that, if *agriculture* and its needs were not created by Italy's "early" religion, the ancient Italians' concepts of property, the family, conjugal relations and justice owed their origin to early religion and, in that sense, obeyed, in their modifications, the laws of independent mental development.

Such views are readily voiced in our country today when many more or less progressive people have set themselves the aim of refuting the economic materialists, who, it is claimed, are out to revive Hegel's idealist "metaphysics". Only it is a pity that such views are merely a certain modification of the view held by that same Hegel on the self-development of concepts in general, and legal concepts in particular. Thus, the well-known Hegelian Hans considered that "individual systems of positive law ... are individual moments in the development of the overall legal idea which is constantly and ever further evolving in accordance with eternal laws", and that the task of science consists in the study of each of these moments and their necessary replacement. The economic materialists do not share this view, which was once held in such high esteem by Hegel, Hans and other such idealists, and is today held so dear by our Russian opponents of Hegelian "metaphysics". In the opinion of the economic materialists, legal concepts develop, *not of themselves* but under the influence of the

1881, p. 363, as well as his *La civilisation primitive*, t. I, p. 495, [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of Edward B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*] and also A. Réville, *Le religions des peuple non civilisés*, Paris, 1883, t. II, p. 253).)

In view of all this, we have no grounds to include the religion of primitive peoples among the "factors" in the development of primitive society. This is too often lost sight of by the sociologists.⁷²

mutual relationships entered into by producers under the impact of economic necessity. "The legal idea has long gone hand in hand with economic necessity," said Rodbertus. Was he right? It will suffice to recollect at least the history of the primitive family to see that he was not mistaken.

One of two things is possible: either the legal institutions of a given country are in accord with its economic needs, or they are not in that accord. Let us examine each of these two possibilities separately.

If a given country's legal institutions are in accord with its economic needs, i.e., to put it more precisely, with the mode of production predominant there, then, of necessity, the question arises: what has brought about that accordance? Of course, different answers are possible.

One might say the following:

A given country's legal institutions are in keeping with the mode of production predominant there because they are themselves *an effect and an expression* of social needs and relations which must arise under the given mode of production. An appropriate system of positive law, i.e., one which accords with the mode of production is a simple consequence of legal institutions, which have become *inappropriate* losing their vitality and gradually withering away, or being abolished after a more or less lengthy and stubborn struggle between the defenders and the opponents of the old order. Legal institutions that are appropriate in the sense specified above are an essential condition of the existence of human societies. That is why these societies are constantly striving to establish such appropriate institutions, although the equilibrium they achieve is being constantly upset by the development of the productive forces: each new step in this development creates a new discrepancy between the modes of production, on the one hand, and the legal institutions, on the other. It is then that a new struggle arises between the conservatives and the progressives, a new upheaval takes place in the realm of law, and so on and so forth, right down to our days. The legal idea has always and everywhere gone hand in hand with economic necessity.

That is what the "economic" materialists say.*

* "To determine the historico-evolutionary or genetic continuity or dependence of legal relations and customs that arise at different times among different people, and to be able to say that a given law or custom is more ancient or primitive than another law or custom," says Prof. Richard Hildebrandt, "a criterion is needed that emerges from the confines of chronology or is completely independent of the latter. Economic culture can serve as that criterion because it is only there that an absolutely definite course of development takes place, one that is always the same in its general features and is always directed in one and the same direction" (*Recht und Sitte*

I think they are absolutely right, but let us assume that they are mistaken and that the development of legal *institutions* is, as Hegel and the Hegelians say, a simple consequence of the development of legal *notions*. In that case, how are we to explain the correspondence between a given country's legal institutions and the mode of production predominant in it?

To explain that correspondence, we have only to assume that there exists a pre-established harmony between the development of legal notions, on the one hand, and the development of economic relations on the other.

To you, Sir, this may seem a bold statement; at a moment of anger, you may even consider it an absurd paradox. But I am in earnest when I say so.

In fact, as we see it, notions develop in an independent fashion, according to their own laws. Modes of production also develop independently, and also according to their own laws.* If, in a given period, the results of the *development of notions* prove in accord with the *results of economic development*, I cannot explain this otherwise than as pre-established harmony or as chance. However, chance can provide no explanation, so pre-established harmony alone remains.

At this point, you will impatiently interrupt me and reprove me for something the "economic" materialists are now so often and undeservedly reproached with, i.e., a proneness to metaphysics.

Anyone who so wishes, you will exclaim, is free to sink into the bog of metaphysics; perhaps the only escape from that bog is along the path of preordained harmony. But that bog can be bypassed and with the greatest of ease: what is necessary is to follow the beaten track of realism. One should only remember that the economy's development hinges on human notions which, in their turn, come under the influence of the economy. Between these two factors there exists an indubitable *interaction*, which resolves all the difficulties we have mentioned. Why should we need the hypothesis of preordained harmony?

auf den verschiedenen wirtschaftlichen Kulturstufen, Erster Teil, 1896, Introduction, p. III).

In reality, however, the course of economic development is not as uniform as R. Hildebrandt thinks, but that is another question, which does not concern us here. As for his view on the causal dependence of the development of law and customs on the development of the economy, I am, of course, in complete agreement with him.)

* Hegel would not have agreed with this latter assumption: he would have said that modes of production are also determined by the course of the development of the Absolute Idea. But then, Sir, you and I are not Hegelians.

We shall now see whether these difficulties are resolved by such interaction. But first let us examine the second of our assumptions, i.e., the assumption that a given country's legal institutions are *not* in accord with its economy.

We have already seen that such an instance can be excellently explained from the viewpoint of economic materialism. A given country's legal institutions do not accord with its economy whenever a new advance in the productive forces places people in new relations towards one another; the need then appears for the existing system of positive law (private and public) to be reconsidered, and the time for social revolution sets in.

How can this instance be explained from the viewpoint of those who consider the independent development of legal concepts possible? Here, too, the matter seems simple and very clear at first glance. Legal concepts no longer accord with a country's economy for the reason that they are ahead of the development of that economy, or, on the contrary, the latter is in advance of the development of legal notions. If those notions are ahead of the economy, the latter will sooner or later be refashioned in keeping with the progress of concepts; if the economy is ahead of legal concepts then a new step in their development will restore the correspondence desired. Thus, nothing here would seem to contradict the assumption regarding the independent development of the factor of mentality.

On closer examination, however, this simple explanation also proves highly confused. Let us take, as an example, France in the eighteenth century, when the legal institutions lagged behind the notions of a considerable part of the country's population. One might think that the cause of all the internal disturbances in France of the times was this backwardness of *institutions* as compared with the *notions*, that consequently the disturbances were caused by the advance of the notions held, and that the history of France in the second half of the eighteenth century, therefore, fully confirms the idea of the independent development of human mentality. That, however, is too hasty a judgement. It should not be forgotten that France's legal institutions clashed with the notions held by a very definite part of the French population, i.e., the *third estate*, a class of people with a very definite economic status. It is this circumstance which provides grounds to consider that the legal notions then held by this part of the population were not a product of independent development but were a consequence of changes in its economic status. But that is not all. The thinking representatives of the third estate appealed to *justice* in their struggle against the obsolete legal institutions. One cannot but agree that it was an act of justice to abolish those institutions which had become an impediment to most Frenchmen. However,

justice is a very vague concept, and also a highly abstract one. What is important is the concrete content given it by some individual or a class of people. What then were the legal institutions which the thinking part of the third estate considered *just*? Those that corresponded to the capitalist mode of production, i.e., the mode that derived from France's preceding economic development.* You will agree, Sir, that this is a highly interesting fact! If we disregard the idea of preordained harmony, we will, of course, see such a fact as a new argument against the idea of the independent development of concepts and as fresh proof in favour of the theory of "economic" materialism.

Of course, it may be said—I repeat that anything may be said—that if the progressive French philosophers, who rose up against feudal property, had no objections to capitalist property, the only reason for that was that they had not yet arrived at any other concepts, and in no way because they had experienced the irresistible influence of the new and triumphant mode of production. *Why was it, I shall ask, that they failed to arrive at such concepts?* Could it have been because, in accordance with the law of the independent development of mentality, people could not but have come, at a certain stage of their historical development, to a recognition of bourgeois property? For my part, I shall add that a reference to the allegedly independent development of human concepts can explain absolutely nothing. People held certain concepts because they were of necessity obliged to hold them, in accordance with the laws of the independent development of mentality! But can this be considered an answer? Can this be a solution of the problem? It is simply another way of saying: *votre fille est malade, parce qu'elle est tombée en maladie.*⁷³ Such explanations cannot take us very far!

But that is not all. The French Enlighteners waged a struggle against the survivals of *feudal* institutions. But what were the origins of feudal institutions? Where did the feudal system spring from? The Enlighteners considered it an outcome of human error,

* I may be reminded of such writers as Morelly and Mably, who were inclined towards communism. I shall, however, observe that these writers' communism was, in essence, nothing but fairly empty declamation in favour of equality—a declamation to which they themselves did not attach any *practical* significance. The degree in which such attacks against property were nothing but simple declamation is to be seen in the example of *Brissot*, whose definition of property as theft—a definition later borrowed from him by Proudhon—did not prevent him from being a mouthpiece of *bourgeois* trends. The French declamatory attacks against property and in defence of *antique* equality contained no analysis at all of the various historical kinds of property. Since that kind of analysis was given in the works of France's progressive writers of the last century, the latter, with the possible exception of Rousseau, were all defenders of *bourgeois* property.

in other words, of the wrong development of human concepts. However, the historians of the Restoration period were already attempting to explain it as the result of medieval economic relations. The greater the advance made in the study of the feudal way of life in the various peoples of Europe and Asia, the more their point of view is borne out, and the more obvious it becomes that feudal institutions were not, and could not have been, the simple outcome of the development of human concepts.

I regret that lack of space prevents me from going into any further discussion of this matter. Besides, I realise that it is high time for me to go over to the question of the *interaction* between the various factors of social development—an interaction, a notion of which should, in the opinion of many Russians and not only of Russians, underline any commonsense and not “*metaphysical*” philosophy of history.

Let us imagine that we have before us a system of forces: A, B, C, and so on. I shall be asked whence these forces have appeared. I shall reply that each one of them acts upon all the rest. Let us assume that I am right in stating that an interaction actually exists between these forces. But you will agree, Sir, that the question put to me has not been answered, and that by indicating that an interaction exists between these forces I have not yet explained where they come from. Anyone who has asked me that question will be entitled to say that *I am simply evading a reply*.

The same must be said of the interaction between the social economy and human thought, an interaction which is often cited as a most decisive and triumphant objection to the “one-sided theory of economic materialism”. This reference does not solve the question to which that theory, for better or for worse, provides a reply; it is merely a track along which people consciously or unconsciously *draw back from that question*.

The interaction between various “factors” in historical development is in no wise denied by the economic materialists; they merely say that, taken by itself, the interaction explains absolutely nothing. In this, they are quite right; logic is indisputably on their side because any interaction between certain forces presupposes the existence of those forces, and to say that they act upon each other is no explanation of their origin.

You will object to me that the origin of the mental “factor” is explained by man’s physical organisation. To that I shall reply: we are speaking, *not of the origin of man’s ability to think but of the origin of human concepts*, the origin of absolutely definite views concerning property, the relation between man and woman, the mutual relations among members of family and society, and of people’s attitude towards the “primordial” pagan gods. These views can in no way be considered a product of biological

evolution. Neither can their appearance be attributed to the interaction between them and the social economy, because, I repeat, they must already be in existence for them to experience the impact of the economy and to affect the latter in their turn. And if you will again tell me that they have arisen independently in view of the specific laws of man's mental evolution, then I shall repeat, after noting that you have been obliged to abandon the viewpoint of interaction, which seems to have held out so much promise: *any reference to some special law of independent mental evolution is not a solution of the problem but merely a new formulation, its expression in other words.*

Let us take an example. According to Sismondi, under King Philip VI of France, "romances of chivalry, which provided the sole reading at court and at the châteaux, changed the manners of the nation in teaching all members of the nobility ... the perfection they should achieve or at least admire..."*

Literature did exert an influence on manners. But where did it spring from? What was the reason for the existence of romances of chivalry? It is quite clear that they were due to the existence of knightly manners. Here is an interesting example of interaction: the literature of feudal society influenced its manners which, in their turn, influenced its literature. But whence that feudal society itself appeared is in no way explained by the indisputable fact of that interesting interaction.

Let us take another example. When Helvetius's celebrated book *De l'Esprit* was published, certain stern guardians of the old order said that this philosopher should be burned at the stake together with his book. They went on to say that quite sufficient grounds for such a sentence could be found in the French legislation. However, this cruel idea was not given effect, for the manners of French society had by that time become too mild for the survivals of medieval barbarity to be resorted to so easily or frequently.** Thus milder manners affected juridical practices. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that comparative mildness shown in juridical practice exerted a beneficial influence on manners. Manners affected juridical practice, and vice versa. The interaction is obvious. But why was it that manners had become milder? Whence the juridical practice, which became milder because manners had also grown milder? That is something we do not know, and is not explained by the interaction we have spoken of.

Let us take a third example. The existence of feudal institutions no doubt *slowed down* France's economic development in the last

* *Histoire des Français*, t. X, p. 59.

** That they were sometimes resorted to is shown by other well-known examples.

century. Those institutions collapsed under the pressure of the new economic needs. Their downfall gave a new impetus to France's economic development. Again the interaction is obvious. But what had led to the appearance of the new economic relations in France? Again, the origins of the institutions which held up their development for a fairly lengthy period are in no way explained by that interaction.

But if interaction cannot explain anything, and if the assumption of the existence of preordained harmony between the development of institutions (and also of concepts) on the one hand, and the development of the social economy on the other, is quite improbable, then one can appeal only to the factor indicated by the "economic" materialists. That factor alone can explain, with the utmost ease, all the numerous difficulties we come up against at every step in our study of social development.

Sir, let us recall Darwin. That masterly researcher explains the origin of man and his capacities from the angle of *biology*. However, he has written several pages which are also of tremendous importance to the *sociologists* too. In his opinion, man's moral sentiments and concepts are explained by the influence of *social relations*. If humans lived in absolutely the same conditions as bees do, apiarian morals would be predominant among them, and they would regard with complete indifference the annihilation of their own kind that periodically takes place in the beehive.* Moreover, they would even consider themselves in duty bound to commit such horrors, so that anyone who refused to do so would be offending against morality.

If that kind of morality existed, it would no doubt exert an influence on social relations and would help to consolidate and further develop them. Thus, an indisputable interaction would be established. Nevertheless, it is evident that social relations would not have been created by morality, but the latter would have been created by social relations.

But where do social relations spring from?

We speak of the social relations that exist in *human* societies. Such relations are those among *people*; they are created by people. Therefore, they seem to be the product of man's free activity. But what is man's free will? "L'illusion d'un être qui a conscience de lui même comme cause et n'a pas conscience de lui même comme effet" (the illusion of a being that is aware of itself *as cause*, but is not aware of itself *as effect*). This excellent definition by Diderot is applicable both to the *individual* and to *social man* (Gesellschaftsmensch, as Marx puts it). When people sometimes think that the given social relations have been created by their free will,

* *The Descent of Man*, London, 1883, pp. 99-100.

that is a repetition of the age-old illusion that people "are not aware of themselves as effect". Any given system of relations has in considerable measure been created by human will, but human will is directed towards the creation of that system for reasons that do not depend on men. Before becoming a cause, will is an *effect*, and it is the task of sociology as a science to understand as an *effect* that will of social man which is directed towards maintaining or creating a given system of social relations.

Social man is a product of long zoological development; his cultural history begins only when, unsatisfied with appropriating Nature's free gifts, he himself begins to produce the articles of consumption he needs. The extent and nature of that production are determined at any particular time by the state of the productive forces. The first impulse to the development of the productive forces is provided by *Nature herself*, i.e., man's *geographical environment*. The growing significance of production in the life of social man is accompanied by the growing significance of the social environment for the development of the productive forces. In order to produce, men must enter into definite relations with Nature. But that is not enough. The social process of production also presupposes certain mutual relations among the *producers themselves*. In any given period, these mutual relations among producers are determined by the state of the productive forces. Each new historic step in the development of the productive forces brings about a revolution in the mutual relations among the producers, and at the same time in the entire social system.*

It is thus that there arise social relations on which, as we have indicated above, people's moral and all other concepts depend.

To explain this thought, let us consider the primitive clan, in which hardly any private property exists. Gradually, however, the development of the productive forces undermines the primitive communism. Private property strikes root and develops, involving ever new areas; the rich and poor appear within a society once grounded in equality. This is an entire revolution,

* "In production, men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place.

"These social relations, into which the producers enter with one another, the conditions under which they exchange their activities and participate in the whole act of production, will naturally vary according to the character of the means of production. With the invention of a new instrument of warfare, firearms, the whole internal organisation of the army necessarily changed; the relationships within which individuals can constitute an army and act as an army were transformed and the relations of different armies to one another also changed..." (Marx).⁷⁴

which inescapably brings about a change in family law and in society's political structure. The State comes into being, whose constitution is an expression of society's economic relations. Thus, for instance, the entire political history of the ancient world's civil community that you speak of, Sir, in your article is nothing but an expression of a struggle between the wealthy and the poor, between aristocracy and democracy (something that was so well-known to Aristotle). On the basis of these new institutions there arise definite concepts of private, family and public law, and of relations with other peoples and even with "primordial" pagan gods.

Indeed, Sir, even with "primordial" pagan gods! Pagan religion consists in a deification of the forces of Nature which man does not understand. Religion, primordial in the genuine sense of the word, is of the kind that Max Müller calls *natural*. Based on a deification of the forces of Nature, this natural religion exists at the dawn of social man's cultural history. However, with the development of that man's productive forces, the social environment undergoes more or less profound changes, and the primordial religion acquires a new character: from *natural* religion it turns into *social* religion. Previously mere personifications of the forces of Nature, the gods become guardians and even imaginary creators of the various kinds of property, the family, the State structure and international relations. When a struggle arises among people—for instance, for some particular form of family life—the pagan gods also begin to quarrel among themselves, some taking up the cause of the guardians of the old ways, others siding with the innovators. Thus, with Aeschylus, the Eumenides stand for *matriarchal law*, while Minerva defends the authority of the father. As is commonly known, this interesting goddess had no mother. In this sense, she was nothing but a fantastic reflection, in the human mind, of the struggle during the transition from matriarchal to patriarchal law.

That a certain "mentality" appears on the basis of definite human relations is abundantly clear. It can also be easily shown that definite trends in philosophical thought and artistic creativity arise on the foundation of that "mentality". Suffice it to recall French philosophy of the eighteenth century to see the degree in which it was entirely, and in all its particulars, the creation of the mentality of the third estate in their struggle against the clergy and the nobility. I do not wish to expatiate upon art here but shall confine myself to mentioning Taine's *Philosophie de l'art*.*

* Incidentally, I shall permit myself a brief remark. Mr. Kudrin expressed considerable surprise, in the journal *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, on learning from Beltov that the class struggle is also reflected in the deve-

Human concepts arise on the foundation of social relations. Once they have arisen, such definite concepts must inevitably themselves influence social relations. A reciprocal influence also exists between various spheres of concepts and mental images: religion influences law; revolutions in the sphere of law are, as we have seen, reflected in religious ideas, and so on.

That is the explanation, from the viewpoint of economic materialism, of the interaction between the various factors of historical development.

You have remarked, Sir, that history is more complex than the economic materialists think. To that remark I shall reply that the theory of economic materialism is incomparably broader and more complex than is held by its opponents.

You have pointed to international clashes and to the outcome of such clashes as phenomena that cannot be explained from the viewpoint of economic materialism. However, *at a given time, a clash of two forces, like the very possibility of that clash, is determined by the nature (the properties) of those forces.* In its application to international clashes, this general proposition will be as follows: at any given time, the result of a clash between two societies, like the very possibility of that clash, is determined by the nature (the properties) of those societies, in other words, *by their inner structure.* If the theory of economic materialism provides a satisfactory explanation of the origin of the internal structure of human societies, it thereby also explains both the results and the very possibility of clashes between them.

"Nowadays," says Moltke, "the Bourse possesses so great influence that it is able to have armies called into the field merely

lopment of architecture. I think! that the only reason to reproach Beltov is for his not having given his thought a more universal expression. Quite some time ago, Rodbertus spoke of the dependence shown by the architecture of any historical period on the economic life of that period: "In dem Baustil jeder Zeit spiegeln sich in der That die Grundzüge des volkswirtschaftlichen Lebens vor. Das römische Haus, das mittelalterliche städtische Bürgerhaus mit seinen Speicherräumen ... und das moderne Familien- und Salonhaus sind bezeichnende Marksteine einer dritthalbtausend-jährigen volkswirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, denn keine Kunst steht in grösserer Abhängigkeit von den sozialen Verhältnissen, als die Baukunst, und man hat daher mit Recht gesagt: einen neuen charakteristischen Baustil erhalten wir erst mit neuen sozialen Grundlagen ..." (Rodbertus, "Zur Frage des Sachwerths des Geldes im Alterthum". Hild. *Jahrbücher*, S. 365. B. XIV). [The architectural style of every epoch reflects in reality the fundamental features of economic life. The Roman house, the house of the mediæval urban burgher with its parlours, and the present-day family house and salon are characteristic landmarks in the economic development of the last two and a half thousand years, since none of the arts depends more on social relations than architecture does, so therefore it has been said with good reason: a new and characteristic architectural style appears only together with a new social basis....]

to protect its interests. Mexico and Egypt have had European armies of occupation inflicted upon them simply to satisfy the demands of haute finance".* What is your opinion, Sir, as to why the *Bourse* can now decide questions of war and peace? Does that not depend on the *economic* condition of civilised societies?

The results of clashes between tribes of hunters do not and cannot resemble the results of clashes between agricultural peoples; the results of clashes between agricultural peoples living in the conditions of a natural economy do not and cannot resemble the results of clashes between modern capitalist countries. Why is that so? Is it not because the outcome of all these clashes depends on the economic conditions of the belligerents?

(I have before me a book by Letourneau entitled *La guerre dans les diverses races humaines* (Paris, 1895). It is marked by the usual shortcomings in Letourneau's writings: the facts are adduced without the necessary criticism, while the method of their scientific appraisal is marked by a complete disregard of all the requirements of scientific research. Nevertheless, even this poorly considered work contains numerous direct and indirect arguments that support the view I defend. Indeed, read the following page, at least: "The first clans had nothing as yet to defend, besides the areas in which they gathered fruit, hunted and fished.... As long as this primitive state of affairs existed, wars could not enrich the victor: there was nothing as yet to plunder. That was why the Redskins never raised the war hatchet in a desire for gain; they did not even despoil the dead. These manners changed with the appearance of pastoral and agricultural life. It was then that *raids* (*razzias*) were undertaken to steal cattle, crops, implements, etc; war shed even the semblance of justice; plunder became its main object; killing was done for the sake of plunder and was sometimes pursued right up to the extermination of the enemy unless calculations of self-interest did not restrain the victor's arm, that is to say, unless he spared his stricken adversary so as to enslave him.... Later, war became, above all, a *razzia*, a forcible invasion undertaken with the aim of rapine. The land itself became an object of plunder, its conquest becoming more and more frequent as human societies grew in size following the forcible subjugation of enslaved neighbours. Big states came into being, with whole armies going off to the wars. The most ferocious were the armies of nomadic peoples whose campaigns were primarily predatory. The conquests of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane were nothing but vast raids. Political evolution proceeded hand in hand with the institution of slavery. The very fact of warfare led to the establishment of aristocracies; war leaders became kings,

* *La guerre de 1870*, Paris, 1891, p. 2.

priestly castes or classes were founded and lived on the best of terms with the mighty; monarchs were more and more likened to gods.

"It was above all when there arose societies with such complex structures and firmly founded on agriculture and slavery that the grand era of conquests set in."*

You will agree, Sir, that an important place is given in this argument to the "factor" of conquest. In my opinion, it has been given excessive importance. Of course, Letourneau is unable to prove that war was the *ultimate and root* cause of the rise of the aristocracy. In reality conquests merely lead to native aristocracies *yielding place* to those of the conquerors. This was the case, for instance, in England, where the Saxon aristocracy were ousted by the Norman. However, this is no place to expatiate on this matter. I am prepared to agree that Letourneau has not exaggerated anything and that conquests have actually played, in the history of social development, the role he ascribes to them. I would like to ask you whether you have not failed to notice that even Letourneau has had to causally link the development of the factor of conquest with the development of the social economy. With savages, who subsist by gathering fruit, hunting and fishing, war plays a role that is quite different, and the belligerents pursue quite other aims than is the case in societies more advanced along the road of economic development. The appearance of the pastoral and especially of the agricultural way of life was an epoch in the history of wars. The real era of conquests set in only when society became firmly founded in agriculture and was divided into classes. What does that mean? It means that even those who are much inclined to exaggerate the importance of conquests in the history of social development cannot but now see that, in the final analysis, the nature of wars and the social consequences of military clashes are determined by the course of economic development. That is exactly what the "economic" materialists say. And if the latter are right in this case, then there are no grounds to tell them that warfare is a social phenomenon that does not lend itself to a materialist explanation.

That the technical level of the art of war is conditioned by the social systems of the belligerents concerned is now obvious to any educated soldier. "In reality," says the French Colonel Rousset, "the social structure characteristic of any given historical period exerts a decisive influence, not only on a people's military organisation, but even on the characters, abilities and aspirations of military men."** Of course, in any war very much depends on the military leader. But what is meant by a great soldier? This is

* *La guerre...*, pp. 530-31.

** *Les maîtres de la guerre: Frédéric II, Napoléon, Moltke. Essai critique d'après les travaux inédits de M. le général Bonnal*, p. 4.

how Colonel Rousset replies to the question: "The ordinary generals apply those means that are ready to hand, and employ methods that are already in current usage.... As for the great soldiers, these adapt the means and devices of warfare to suit their own genius."* Wherein lies the *genius* of a great soldier? It consists in his transforming those means and devices, while being guided by instinctive surmise, in keeping with the laws of social evolution, which exerts its influence on the warlike material. The great soldier differs from the ordinary general *only* in his understanding, with the insight of genius, those new material that is required by the new social relations and by the new social psychology that has grown out of those relations. That is very clear and perfectly true. But that is not the only thing which is clear. It is also clear that *such* a view concerning the role and significance of great soldiers is a fresh argument in defence of the theory that you call in question.**

The strange prejudice is still widespread in Russia that the theory of economic materialism dooms the "individual" to inactivity and that if the "economic" materialists are right, then "everything" will come about of itself, and it will remain for the "individual" to wait with folded arms. I will not inquire here into the source of this prejudice, but shall merely say that it will at once vanish as soon as our intellectuals will go to the trouble of giving some thought to the theory of "economic" materialism.

Can it be that, in his private life, a thinking man must of necessity turn into an Oblomov⁷⁶ if only he is in agreement with the Diderot definition cited above: freedom of will is an illusion in a creature who is conscious of himself as a cause but not as an effect? Can it be that a great musician will give up music on learning that genius is the result of a certain or rather an as yet unknown condition of the brain? Of course, not! It is ridiculous even to speak of it. Then why should a public figure give up his activities on realising that his ideals are themselves a product of economic development? If they are indeed such a product, then the firmer are

* *ibid.*, same page.

(** Besides the works I have enumerated, I might mention an interesting piece of research by Professor E. Ciccotti, *La pace e la guerra nell'antica Atene*, Scansano, 1897. The main conclusion drawn in it is the following: "Le due tendenze alla pace e alla guerra, discordi ed opposte, hanno in Atene un singolare rilievo e ad invaer alli ma con insistenza si riaffacciano per tre secoli della sua storia, riassumendo nei due diversi indirizzi il grado di sviluppo economico, i bisogni, la potenzialità produttiva, le lotte di classe, rivoluzioni politiche dello stato," p. 2. [Two discordant and opposite trends towards war and peace were of singular importance in Athens, and, though at certain intervals of time, they insistently revealed themselves during three centuries of Athenian history, summing up, in the two differing trends, the degree of economic development, the mounting needs of the production capacities, the class struggle, and the political revolutions in the state.])

the guarantees of their embodiment. "Mankind..." Marx said. "... inevitably sets itself only such tasks that it is able to accomplish, since closer examination will always show that a problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation."⁷⁶ If that is so, then the greater the confidence of success and the more unflagging the zeal with which we can and must work for the accomplishment of the great tasks that are agitating contemporary civilised humanity. Or perhaps our energy will be sapped by the unworthy consideration that the cause we have taken up has been sufficiently prepared by history? Perhaps we would like to find ourselves in a position entitling us to say for all to hear: but for us, mankind would stagnate in ignorance, and would perish from all kinds of calamities; we have appeared on the scene and things are progressing marvellously well? But this is a very strange way of thinking, one worthy only of the rampant philistine money-bag.

When it is asserted that, according to the theory of economic materialism, everything takes place of itself and will continue to do so, the essence of that theory is wholly distorted. It affirms that social relations (in *human society*) are relations between *people*; no major step in mankind's historical advance can take place without the participation, not merely of people but of a vast multitude of people, i.e., the *masses*. The necessity of the masses taking part in great historic events makes it essential that the more developed and morally outstanding individuals should exert their influence on them. This gives full scope for fruitful work by individuals; should there appear among the latter such that would become Oblomovs under the influence of economic materialism, the fault would lie, not with economic materialism but with those particular individuals, for they are patently most incapable of logical thinking, and are an "*effect*" highly prone to inactivity.

Remarkably enough. Sir, our "personalities" have taken to eagerly contraposing themselves to the "natural course of events" in the last ten to fifteen years when, as admitted by the "personalities" themselves, the moral and intellectual level of the intelligentsia has fallen woefully. In the seventies, the most progressive and energetic individuals willingly looked upon themselves as mere instruments of history. "We do not believe in the possibility of creating in the people, through preparatory work, ideals that differ from those developed in it by all preceding history," wrote an outstanding and energetic Populist* (now deceased, I am sorry to say) in the late seventies. "Great events," he went on to say, "are the affair of the masses. They are prepared by history. Individuals are incapable of giving them any direction; they can only be the instruments of history, and give expression to the people's aspira-

* [Narodnik in Russian.]

tions.”⁷⁷ Today such words would arouse indignation even in people who could not stand the least comparison, in respect of their activities, with the author of the lines I have quoted. Whence the change? I can answer that question. Some twenty years ago, our progressives believed in the people; they were genuinely convinced that there existed, among the people, a trend whose meaning was identical with the ideals of the intelligentsia. That was why such individuals willingly regarded themselves merely as instruments of history, as persons merely expressing the aspirations of the people. Today, however, a considerable part of such “personalities” have, in fact, lost all faith in the people, though they speak of it, out of habit, most feelingly. Today, these “personalities” see that individualist trends are predominant in the people and that the people’s economy runs counter to their ideals, which is why they stand opposed to it. If they were able to bring their ideals in line with the present condition of the Russian economy, they would not hesitate to refer to the latter as the best argument in favour of their ideals; however, they are incapable of bringing them in line with the Russian economy of today, and the reason is that they do not understand the theory of economic materialism.

In your article, Sir, you contrast to the economic materialists people “who consider possible deliberate and purposeful intervention in economic affairs by the individual, society and the State”. But have the economic materialists denied the possibility of such intervention? Have they ever said, for instance, after the manner of the Manchester School,⁷⁸ that the State should not interfere in the people’s economic life? No, Sir, they have said nothing of the kind. It is true, however, that they never understood the possibility of State intervention as abstractly as the Russian Populists now do. In the opinion of the economic materialists, everything hinges on circumstances of time and place, as the author of the notes on Mill has put it.⁷⁹

When the French big bourgeoisie of the times of Louis Philippe came out in defence of protective tariffs designed to save them from British competition, they recognised in principle and in the first place the possibility of state intervention in the economic life of the people, and, in the second place, clearly saw the *practical* possibility of such intervention in *their* interests—those of the big bourgeoisie: the power was in their hands, and they had only to make use of it.

But during the Restoration they did not always discern the practical possibility of such intervention: that was often precluded by the predominant influence of the aristocracy. To make state intervention possible, the big bourgeoisie had to nullify, without fail, the influence of that aristocracy, i.e., bring about certain

changes in the "superstructure" that had arisen on that economic basis.

In just the same way when, under the aforementioned Louis Philippe, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class were giving thought to the improvement of their lot—though they allowed, in principle, the possibility of state intervention in the economic life of the people—they did not see any practical possibility of such intervention serving their interests: it was not they but the big bourgeoisie that held control of power which was why the petty bourgeoisie and the workers wanted electoral reform.

There are times when state intervention in the economic life of the people in a way beneficial to a given class presupposes the existence of certain political conditions, in whose absence there can be no talk of state intervention. In reality, of course, there is talk of such things even then, but that comes from empty and short-sighted people who do not themselves understand the significance of the interests they are out to defend.

Along the long curve of mankind's historical development there exist points of vastly significant turns. Let us denote such points by the letters A, B, C, D and so on. When economic development reaches point A, that denotes the triumph of a definite class; when it reaches point B, the formerly ruling class recedes into the background, yielding place to a new dominant class; ultimately, when the advance reaches, let us say, point C, there is no longer any struggle between classes because the very division of society into classes has vanished. Mankind's advance from point A to point B, from point B to point C and so on, right up to point S, *never takes place on the plane of the economy alone*. To go over from point A to point B, from point B to point C and so on calls each time for a rise into the "superstructure" and for certain changes to be made there. It is only after such alterations have been made that a desired point can be reached. *The road from one turning point to another always lies through the "superstructure"*. The economy hardly ever triumphs of itself; it can never be said of it: *farà da se*. No, never *da se* but always *by means of the superstructure alone*, always and *only* through certain political institutions. Such is the indubitable meaning of the theory of economic materialism when we regard it from the viewpoint of "practical reason".

What do a given country's political institutions hinge on? We already know that they are an expression of economic relations. For that practical expression, however, these economically prompted political institutions must first pass through the minds of people in the shape of certain *concepts*. That is why mankind, in its economic advance, can never go over from one turning point to another without first going through an entire revolution in its *concepts*.

However, if we speak of concepts, that means that we are going over to the question of *education*, which, incidentally, you deal with in your article.

You say that a striving towards education is appearing on all sides in the midst of our people and that the efforts of all properly thinking people should be directed to that end. This is indeed a great and indisputable truth! Yes, it is here that, first and foremost and most of all, every effort should be bent by those who do not wish, to quote from the poet, to cast shame on the title of citizen.⁸⁰ But do the economic materialists require any convincing on that score? Have they never said that what is most of all necessary at present is the promotion of *consciousness of self in the producers*? That is almost the same thing that you have said. *Almost the same thing*, because the fostering of that consciousness in producers is a task that is more definite—though, true, far more difficult—than the *simple propagation of knowledge* in the people. A producer who can read and write and possesses some more or less elementary scientific information is superior in all respects to a producer who is steeped in the impenetrable murk of ignorance in which the peasant Ivan Yermolayevich,⁸¹ whom G. I. Uspensky depicted so artistically as representing a system of agrarian ideals, vegetated in so miserably. Despite the system of his ideals, Ivan Yermolayevich was not yet a person in the genuine sense of the word, but only the *possibility* of a person. If Mishutka, that son of the humanoid Ivan Yermolayevich, did feel a thirst after knowledge (which he did not in Uspensky's writings) he would have already been a *man*. Were he to acquire some knowledge, even if elementary, he would already take some steps, even if short ones, along the road of *human development* and thereby stand far superior to his father. But even if he does possess some knowledge of arithmetic and natural science, he may remain a crass ignoramus in what pertains to his own social standing and the tasks stemming therefrom. Until he has become aware of such tasks, he will remain a mere *cipher* in the sense of some conscious impact on the blind force of the economy, even if he has taken several steps along the road of human development. No matter how much we intellectuals may speak of the possibility of people exerting a rational influence on the development of economic relations, that influence will not be effected in Mishutka's interests until he sets himself the aim of influencing those relations.

In the final analysis, his emancipation from the blind force of economic necessity can be only a matter for Mishutka himself. That is why no work can be more fruitful than that done by people who will undertake to explain all this to Mishutka.

You say that a most praiseworthy thirst after knowledge has arisen in the countryside. That is quite true and highly gratifying. What is incomprehensible is why you mention *only* the countryside. That most praiseworthy thirst after knowledge is even stronger in the cities, in the big industrial centres. Their inhabitants are far more receptive because of their conditions. It is they who must be addressed in the first place. (The economic materialists are launching, *in the cities*, the cause that the Populists of the seventies were out to initiate *in the countryside*.)

As you see, Sir, economic materialism in no way dooms its adherents to inactivity, and quietism⁸² and economic materialism are not one and the same thing.

"No matter how pained he may be by the distress of the people, and no matter how much he may suffer from a consciousness of the burden of that distress," you say, "the Marxist, as one convinced of the inevitable triumph of capitalism in Russia as well, must, however, accelerate that process so as to bring about the speediest possible onset of the capitalist stage, after which the production relations will bring forth a new economic system, one that coincides with what we call the demands of justice."

Leaving aside the vagueness of the expression "an economic system, one that coincides with what we call the demands of justice", I shall observe that you have failed to draw a fully correct conclusion from what the economic materialists say of the inevitability of the complete triumph of capitalism in Russia.

Let us suppose that some free-thinking Austrian of the forties voiced the conviction that, by his reactionary policies, Metternich was himself leading up to the downfall of his system.

Will you say that, if some free-thinking Austrian had been a man of rigorous logic and deep convictions, he should have become an agent of Metternich and support all his reactionary measures with might and main? You will not say that; you are well aware that such a free-thinking Austrian could have found some other and far more worthy cause on *ground unwittingly prepared by Metternich*.

However, your thinking is different in respect of the economic materialists. On learning that, in their opinion, capitalism is preparing the ground for the triumph of an economic system that coincides with the demands of justice, you affirm that they can now have no other concern than the implanting of capitalism. Whence that difference? Why is it that your attitude towards the economic materialists does not coincide with the "demands of justice"? It is because you understand full well what kind of work could have been found for an opponent to the Metternich system, while you fail to understand what can be done by those who, while

being opponents, in principle, of capitalism are not horrified on seeing its undoubted triumph in Russia.

I hope that this sad misunderstanding will in some measure be removed by what I have said on the need for the development of consciousness in the producers and on other things.

"Should that process be accelerated?" Yes, indeed, it should. But that can be done in different ways. Only Mr. Obolensky, for instance, is mistaken in thinking that the impoverishment of the people could accelerate the development of capitalism. *It is not accelerated but slowed down by the impoverishment of the people.* Conversely, it is undoubtedly speeded up by the growing consciousness of the producers, as has been so well borne out by the practice of West-European social life. On the other hand, however, that growth improves the producer's condition, i. e., removes at least *some* of capitalism's injurious aspects. With some reservations, it can be said that the better the producers' condition, the higher the degree of his consciousness. It thus follows that the acceleration of the capitalist process can be promoted by taking sides at the same time with the producer. It is this that Mr. Obolensky does not seem to understand.

The economic materialists do not at present consider it possible for the state to deliberately intervene in the Russian people's economic life, with the aim of carrying out the "demands of justice". You seem to be distressed by that. But allow me to ask you: can it be that you consider that possible? Could you have forgotten that everything hinges on the circumstances of time and place? But, in your words, those who stand for justice "should struggle as much as they can to save each living man, to prevent the peasant from being divorced from the land", and so on. All that is very fine, but struggling *individually* to save "living men" means engaging simply in philanthropy. Of course, philanthropy is all very fine in its way, but you and I are not speaking of philanthropy.

It is all very fine to "struggle" to prevent the peasant from being divorced from the land. But again, that is all very well in certain circumstances of time and place, as Nikolai Chernyshevsky has made clear to you. He engaged ardently and skillfully in a polemic with Professor Vernadsky in defence of communal landownership. Today the supporters of the old foundations in Russia are also defending the commune and are also ready to argue, in the measure of their skill and abilities, with the opponents of the commune. The conclusion is hence drawn that, at least in respect of the commune, our present-day supporters of those foundations share the view of the author named above. But that conclusion is too hasty. Between Nikolai Chernyshevsky and those who today claim to be his followers lies the vast difference

that they hold a *dogmatic* stand to that very matter which he was *critical* of. In other words, while he defended the commune, *presupposing the existence of certain conditions* whose absence would, in his opinion, deprive it of all meaning, his would-be followers of today stand for the commune *quand-même*, and are prepared to defend it, however radically the external and internal conditions of its existence may change. That is why I say: if such people have remained faithful to the *letter* of this writer's doctrine, it is nevertheless beyond doubt that they have completely forgotten its *spirit*.

In actual fact, they have bungled even its *letter*; what they say is in no way what Nikolai Chernyshevsky did.

Of course, you remember, Sir, that famous article "A Critique of Philosophical Prejudices Against Communal Landownership". This article is usually seen as a defence of our Russian commune. That is an immense error. What the author of this article is defending is not our Russian commune but collective ownership in general, thereby rejecting the opinion of the liberal economists he so dislikes that civilisation is incompatible with collective ownership. What he says is this: civilisation's first step is a negation of that kind of ownership; its second step will be a negation of that negation, a return to collectivism. *En passant*, he proves that the duration of the second period, that of the domination of individual ownership, can—*given certain circumstances and a certain state of affairs in the more advanced peoples*—be reduced to *nil*, i. e., that primitive collective ownership can, in places, immediately go over to the higher form of collectivism. I shall not deal here with the question of whether any supplements or reservations are required by the idea that an entire historical period may be bypassed; I shall only ask: does the article named above deal with the Russian commune? I shall reply: no, it does not. It speaks apropos the argument over the commune *but already not about it*, not on the subject of that commune, which is why the argument on the possibility of bypassing the period of individual ownership does not refer to that commune.

Do you want proof, Sir? I shall supply it.

"I feel ashamed of myself," the author of the article writes in his preface "I am ashamed to recall the untimely confidence with which I raised the question of communal ownership. By doing so, I became rash and, in plain words, became foolish in my own eyes.... It is hard to explain the cause of my shame, but I shall try to do so as best as I can. However important I may find the question of the preservation of communal ownership, it yet comprises only one aspect of the matter it pertains to. As the highest guarantee of the prosperity of those it concerns, this principle becomes meaningful only when other and inferior guarantees of

prosperity are given, such that are necessary to give validity to its operation. Two conditions should be considered as such guarantees: first, that rent should belong to those who actually participate in communal ownership. But that is not enough. It should also be noted that rent is deserving of its name only when the person receiving it is not burdened with credit obligations stemming from the fact of its receipt.... When a person is not fortunate enough to receive rent free of any obligations, then, at least, it is assumed that payments on those obligations will not be very high in comparison with the rent.... It is only given observance of that second condition that those interested in his prosperity can desire that he should receive rent." However, this condition could not be met in the matter of the emancipation of the peasantry, which is why the author of the article cited considers it useless to defend not only communal landownership but even the allotment of land to the peasants. Whoever harbours the least doubt on this score will certainly be convinced by the following example adduced by our author. "Let us suppose," he says, using his favourite method of explanation through "parables", "let us suppose that I have been interested in taking steps to preserve certain foods that go to make up your dinner. It goes without saying that if I have done this out of my good disposition to you, my zeal has been based on the supposition that the food belongs to you and that the dinner cooked from it is wholesome and to your advantage. Imagine my feelings when I learn that the food does not at all belong to you and that, for every dinner cooked from it, you have to pay money, more money than the dinner is worth, a sum that you are in general unable to pay without the utmost difficulty. What thoughts will come into my mind at such strange discoveries?... How stupid I was to have shown concern ... for the preservation of property in certain hands, without making certain in advance that such property will reach those hands and, moreover, on advantageous terms." "Better let all that food go to waste which brings only loss to a man I esteem! A plague on the whole matter which brings you only ruin!"

In another work, the same author writes the following: "Let the emancipation of the peasants be placed in the hands of the landowners' party. It won't make any great difference!" To the observation that there is a vast difference, since the landowners' party has expressed opposition to land being allotted to the peasants, he answers flatly: "No, the difference is not vast, but negligible. It would be vast if the peasants got the land without redemption. There is a difference between taking a thing from a man and letting him keep it, but payment has to be made in either case. The plan of the landowners' party differs from that of the

progressists in being more simple and brief. It is therefore even better. *There is less procrastination and probably also fewer burdens on the peasants.** Any peasant who has the money will buy himself land; there is no need to oblige a moneyless peasant to buy it. *That will only ruin such peasant.** Redemption is just the same as purchase. To tell the truth, let them better be emancipated without land.... The question has been posed in such a way that I see no reason for getting worked up even over whether the peasants will be emancipated or not, and even less over who will liberate them—the liberals or the landowners. In my opinion, it is all the same. Perhaps, the landowners are even better."

Elsewhere in the same work, he observes the following: "There is talk of the emancipation of the peasants. Where are the forces for such a measure? Those forces do not yet exist. It is absurd to set about something for which no strength exists, so you see what matters are moving towards: they will be emancipated. Judge for yourself what will come of it; what can come of tackling something that you cannot carry out?... You will ruin matters, and that will lead to some abomination. What can one say of our emancipators, all those Ryazantsevs and their ilk? What boasters, babblers and fools they all are..."

I think, Sir, that these excerpts bear out with sufficient convincingness the justice of what I have said of the views of Nikolai Chernyshevsky in respect of the Russian commune. First he defended it, and then he saw that the conditions did not yet exist for communal landownership—or even the allotment of land to the peasants in general—to be of benefit to the people. Then he began to feel *ashamed* of the untimely confidence with which he had come out in defence of the commune ("A plague on the whole matter...", etc.).

Those who today claim to be his followers think differently. They set great store by the commune and lose sight of the conditions in whose absence communal landownership can become—and is indeed becoming—*harmful* to the people. They have converted into a dead *dogma* that which he looked upon from a *critical* point of view.

I know that I shall be charged with being unjust. "When have the defenders of the commune lost sight of the conditions that are necessary for it to be of benefit to the people?" I shall be asked. "Is it not the Populists who constantly reiterate that this and that should be done to consolidate the foundations and make them prosperous?" Indeed, the Populist gentlemen have brought forward numerous projects to bolster and perfect the foundations. But quite a number of projects beneficial to the people had been

* Italics are mine.

thought up even when the article "A Critique of Philosophical Prejudices" was published. However, as we have seen, good projects alone were insufficient for the author of that article. A severe and derisive critic, he asked himself: *where are the forces for these projects to be carried out?* When he saw that such forces did not exist and that *good* projects were fated to remain nothing but *projects*, he found it shameful to waste words on their discussion, and acrimoniously called those who cherished them fools, boasters, babblers, and the like. Is that the way the present-day defenders of the "foundations" regard the matter? No, their attitude to them is quite different. To them words are everything; they do not ask themselves whence the forces are to come from for good projects to be carried out. They are affected by the same sterile fancifulness that Nikolai Chernyshevsky condemned so forcefully, and which has been so cruelly ridiculed by the celebrated "Svistok".⁸³

A short while ago, Mr. Glinsky lashed out, on the pages of *Istorichesky Vestnik*⁸⁴, against the economic materialists for their alleged disrespect for the "men of the sixties".⁸⁵ I make so bold as to remark to Mr. Glinsky that he is simply playing with words. The economic materialists might well say to him that there are different kinds of "men of the sixties", in just the same way as there are different kinds of peasants. If, in their aspirations and in the direction of their thoughts and ideas, the "men of the sixties" resemble the author of the notes on Mill, then the economic materialists have the deepest respect for them. However, they cannot have respect for those "men of the sixties" whose complacency would have aroused deep indignation in the author of notes on Mill and all his collaborators.

Like that author, the economic materialists are enemies of individualism. They are convinced that the highest phase of civilisation shall of necessity arrive at that form of ownership which marks the initial phase. However, they think that this is as yet insufficient reason for a defence of *our present-day communal landownership*. At present, that landownership is useless to the people because the conditions do not exist (and, I think, have never existed) for that ownership to be useful to the people,* and the forces do not exist that could establish the presence of such conditions. The economic materialists are harshly disposed to the pipe-dreams of people who imagine that these conditions can be created by scholastic reasoning on the role of the individual in history, that any honest sociologist must inevitably be subjective, and so on. They are censured for their harshness to-

* Regarding this see Волгин, «Обоснование народничества в трудах г. Воронцова (В. В.)» [Volgin, "A Substantiation of Populism in the Works of Mr. Vorontsov (V. V.)"].

wards such people. But what should they do? From Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky and other similar leaders of Russian thought they have learnt to make mock of pipe-dreams; this habit is so deep-rooted in them in this connection that they are beyond correction. It seems to me, however, that this is in no wise a very reprehensible habit.

. Those who say that the economic materialists are indifferent to the economic interests of the people are either grossly in error or are grossly distorting the truth. No, they are not indifferent to them, but they are profoundly convinced that nothing good for the people can ever come, in any respect, from the methods of "struggle" for the people's welfare that are recommended by our supporters of the old "foundations". In *this respect*, there is an abyss between the economic materialists and the Populists. No agreement between them is possible. But, I think, Sir, you are not among the defenders of the "foundations" *quand même*. And it seems to me that the economic materialists could agree in many, but far from all respects, with people of *your* trend.

SOME REMARKS ON HISTORY

(*The Sociological Foundations of History*
by P. Lacombe. Translated from the French under
the Editorship of R. I. Sementkovsky.
Published by F. Pavlenkov)

We feel sure that many Russian readers consider that Lacombe is among what are called (and very wrongly) the economic materialists. If you will, he is indeed an economic materialist, but of a highly specific brand. His views in no way resemble those coming from people to whom we owe the theory known as economic (or, more correctly, dialectical) materialism. That is why we would like to speak about his book.

A good deal of space is devoted in this book to disquisitions on the nature of man, "man in general". In our author's opinion, "human nature" should provide the key to an understanding of social phenomena. In adhering to the viewpoint of human nature, Lacombe quite logically arrives at the conclusion that *psychology* can render far more services to the sociologist than *biology* does. It is not biology but psychology which, in Lacombe's opinion, contains the explanation of history. In his analysis of human nature, he speaks of various requirements inherent in man, for instance, his need of food, clothing and shelter, his sexual needs; the need to love and also to "hate" his fellow-men; the need to win their approval, and finally his artistic and scientific needs.

Lacombe establishes a kind of hierarchy of such needs.

"He who would foresee the historical role of a need," he says, "should first consult its degree of urgency" (p. 47). The need of food, clothing and shelter prove the most vital, but Lacombe goes on to remark that the need to breathe is still more vital yet there is an abundance of available air; we have merely to open our mouths to make use of it. Consequently, important as the latter need is, it could not exert any influence on the development of human societies. *Out of the bodily needs* and various kinds of *industry* designed for their satisfaction, Lacombe has drawn up a special group which he calls *economic*, and considers "the most influential in history".

Because of man's physical constitution, economic activities, precede all others in the individual. They are predominant, not

during some particular period of his life but at all times, day by day. It is only when the economic motivation has played its part that the other desires appear, for whose satisfaction the more time and forces remain, the less these have been expended on economic activities (p. 48). The economic motivation, as the strongest, always and everywhere dominates all the others as soon as it clashes with them. That is why Lacombe considers himself entitled to construct the following "hypotheses": 1) "Societies had to achieve a certain degree of wealth before some intellectual development became possible; 2) Economic progress imperatively modifies the other aspects of the social structure; 3) Progress other than the economic has been possible only in a measure compatible with economic interests" (p. 57).

That is all there is to Lacombe's economic materialism. One cannot but agree with the "hypotheses" he advances, though their wording, i.e., properly speaking, the wording of the second and the third "hypotheses", is not quite satisfactory. It also has to be admitted that, in backing his view with various examples, this author often says much that is true and witty. That is why his book can be read with advantage by all who would cast a sober glance at social life and are tired of the "sociological" flights of fancy in Russia. Only it should not be forgotten that Lacombe's writings are only good in some passages and that, generally speaking, his "materialism" cannot stand up to even the mildest criticism.

The viewpoint of "human nature" has not the least novelty in social science. It was held, for instance, by Aristotle, who as we all know, attempted to prove that slavery is fully *in keeping with* the nature of those who bore its yoke.

It was also adhered to by all the French Enlighteners of the eighteenth century, who never ceased to repeat that slavery is quite *contradictory* to human nature, which needs *freedom*.

The same point of view was held by numerous *opponents* of the French Enlighteners, who tried to justify the old order by references to the selfsame human nature. Then, Auguste Comte was firmly convinced that woman's inferior status was a necessary and inescapable consequence of her nature.* The selfsame Auguste Comte tied his so-called law of three phases⁸⁶ (which he had in fact borrowed from Saint-Simon) to nothing else but human nature.** In general, down to the forties of the present century there was

* See *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à John Stuart Mill*, Paris, 1877, letter dated July 16, 1843, and another dated October 15 of the same year.

** See *Cours de Philosophie positive*, édition de 1869, t. I, pp. 8-9, and t. III, p. 193. On human nature, see also his t. IV, pp. 384, 385, 387, and many other parts of his *Cours*.

hardly any writer on social questions who did not refer, in one way or another, to human nature. Lacombe was greatly mistaken in thinking that the supporters of the theory of what is known as the national spirit were far removed from the viewpoint of human nature.

These people also held this point of view, though they gave it a new appearance: from the nature of "man in general" they evolved the nature of the Roman, the nature of the Greek, that of the German, that of the Slav, and so on and so forth.

Every "nature" of that kind was a charm that solved all historical difficulties. Lacombe is quite right in regarding the theory of the national spirit as groundless.

Just as poorly grounded is the theory, so close to his heart, of the nature of "man in general". Either of two alternatives is possible: either nature is immutable, in which case it is strange to make reference to it, in a study of questions of social development, just strange as it is strange, in general, to explain changes in a *variable* quantity by the properties of a *constant* quantity; or perhaps, man's nature itself undergoes change, in which case it is for the sociologists to discover the causes whose operation brings about its modification. In this case, of course, reference can also be made to human nature, which possesses properties that call for change. This, however, means rotating in a vicious circle, and *talking* one's way out of things when a *scientific solution* is in place. Very many sociologists have found themselves in that vicious circle, an example being the selfsame Auguste Comte, that enemy of "metaphysics", a man who out of "human nature" created a veritable metaphysical entity. Today, however, it is strange for men of science to find themselves in that circle, a way of escape from which was found long ago by no one else but the founders of present-day *dialectical materialism*.

The dialectical materialists say that historical man's "*properties*", habits and aspirations, his views and ideals, his likes and dislikes all change together with the course of social development, which is conditioned by causes located, not within man himself but *outside of him*. The social relations of hunting tribes do not resemble those of tillers of the soil; the social relations of peoples engaged in agriculture under the domination of what is known as *natural economy* do not resemble the social relations of peoples that are "*going through the school of capitalism*", and so on and so forth.

People go over from one mode of production to another, not because a different kind of "nature" has appeared in them but because social man's power over Nature has grown, and because the state of their *productive forces* has changed. That is why it can and should be said that it is in the development of the pro-

ductive forces that the key to mankind's historical advance should be ultimately sought.

It is *Nature* herself that provides the initial impulse for the development of social productive forces, whose growth is in considerable measure determined by the properties of the *geographical environment*. However, man's attitude towards the geographical environment is not a fixed one: the greater the growth of his productive forces, the more rapid is the change in social man's attitude to Nature, and the more rapidly he subjugates it to *his power*. On the other hand, the greater the development of the productive forces, the more rapid and unhampered is their further advance: the productive forces in present-day Britain are growing incomparably more rapidly than they did, for instance, in ancient Greece. It is this inner logic in the development of the productive forces that all social development is ultimately subordinate to, and for the simple reason that social relations which are not in keeping with a given state of the productive forces must inevitably be eliminated: an example is slavery, which ceased to exist when it came into contradiction with society's productive forces or, in simpler words, became unprofitable. It goes without saying that this elimination of outmoded institutions and relations does not come about of itself—an absurd idea, which is often attributed to the dialectical materialists by their opponents. You cannot get something for nothing. This is an old truth the dialectical materialists are very well aware of and are guided by in practice in far greater measure than are many and many smug idealists, subjectivists, etc., etc. But that is not what we are concerned with at the moment. The gist of the matter is that a scholar who has abandoned the viewpoint of human nature cannot seek an explanation of history in *psychology*; neither can that be done in *biology*. The *psychological* point of view is merely a particular instance of the viewpoint of *human nature*; that man's ideas influence his actions cannot be doubted; only those whose thinking is not all it should be can doubt that. But the question is: where do ideas come from? To this question the dialectical materialists give a far clearer answer than do the idealists and the eclectics, who have no other choice than to refer to human nature, i.e., to rehash actually the old theory of in-born ideas, which, already in the second half of the last century, was modified in the sense that an *inborn faculties* to develop intellectually in a particular way and not in another, and to go through certain particular phases in their development, and not through others was ascribed to people.

The "economic" materialist Lacombe has not even a hazy idea of all this. He adheres to a point of view which has been ousted from science by modern materialism. His economic mate-

rialism is highly reminiscent of the first attempts at a materialist explanation of social development, for instance, the one made by *Helvetius*, the only difference being that *Helvetius* was incomparably more gifted, which is why even today his writings are far more instructive than *Lacombe's* booklet.

It was natural for all philosophers who held the viewpoint of human nature to seek after such an ideal order of social relations that would be more in keeping with that nature than any other. In other words, each of them was of necessity a *utopian*. This does not mean that they were all innovators. Far from it; many of them were strict "conservatives" and some of them were merely reactionaries. In essence, however, each one of them looked upon the social order he thought desirable, in just the same way as people called utopians par excellence regarded their ideals; they all measured any given social order with the yardstick⁸⁷ of their concepts of human nature. The reader should recall the above-mentioned arguments of *Comte* regarding the subordination of women. To try to find an ideal social order that best of all corresponds to human nature means trying to find an order farther than which mankind has nowhere to advance, an order in which people, it is true, might make small amendments in their relations but could not, under pain of deviating from their nature, change those relations in their essence. In every *utopian* there was, at least potentially, an sich, a heavy dose of *conservatism*, as is so well borne out by the history of socialist colonies in America.⁸⁸ Such conservatism is quite unthinkable in the dialectical materialists, according to whose theory social relations must change together with the development of social productive forces. What are the limits to the development of those forces? These do not exist. There is therefore no ideal order mankind has nowhere to advance beyond. The dialectical materialists are supporters of non-stop advance.

They are the only progressists in the full sense of the word.

As an adherent of the viewpoint of human nature, *Lacombe* is also a conservative *utopian*.

He is totally incapable of imagining that there can exist economic relations that do not resemble the capitalist relations of today. To him, the downfall of the capitalist order is tantamount to the collapse of civilisation. In this, he fully shares all the prejudices of the vulgar economists. Indeed, not only in this. In his economic views, *Lacombe* does not take a single step farther than these esteemed scholars. To see that, it is sufficient for one to read what he says of the influence of reproduction on the wealth of nations (p. 325 et seq. in the Russian translation). It is not enough to say here that *Lacombe* is in error: there are different kinds of errors, and it has to be said here that he has

not the least understanding of the subject he has made so bold as to argue on. In this, he is as innocent as a babe in arms, though the germs of healthy ideas do sometimes appear here too. "There are two kinds of poverty," he says (p. 327). That is quite true, the poverty of the savage is quite different from that of the proletarian of today; it springs from quite different causes. But, in producing this very correct thought, Lacombe at once drowns it in most naive arguments about *over-population*. "The savages are poor, though not numerous," he says, "because they lack the tools that create values; there are few sharers in distribution, but then there is nothing to distribute. The old civilised peoples possess fine tools and many products, but these have to be shared out among too many." (p. 330). Hence, it is asserted, the existence of poverty in civilised nations. One might think that the "old civilised peoples possess institutions that make known the needs of the entire population, regulate social production in accordance with those needs, and then distribute, again in accordance with the latter, the products obtained. If that were so in reality, and if, despite such an organisation of production, the old "civilised peoples" were still marked by poverty, that phenomenon might well be ascribed to there being too many to join in the sharing. It would then be impossible to say that "there are two kinds of poverty". Both with civilised peoples and with savages, poverty would have equally been a consequence of the impossibility to produce the necessary amount of products. In fact the needs of the poor in present-day capitalist society influence production only inasmuch as they are able to *pay* for the products they need; "sharing" with one who possesses nothing can be done only by another who gives him *alms*, but our author evidently does not have this kind of sharing in mind.

Further: in what measure is the lower class in capitalist countries a representative of "actual", i.e., *paying* demand? In the measure in which it is able to sell the capitalists its labour power: if there is employment, some means of existence, of course very small, do appear; in the absence of work, belts have to be tightened. But what is the purpose of the capitalists' purchase of the proletarian's labour power? It is to extract profit from its productive employment. If the capitalist does not expect to obtain profits, he will not "work", however great society's productive forces may be *of themselves*. What follows is that, in present-day capitalist society, the limits of social production are set by the possibility of *profitable expenditure of capital*, and not at all by the absolute size of the productive forces. That is the reason why, in such societies, poverty is in fact not created by the causes that condition it in the early stages of cultural development. The savage's poverty springs from his relations with Nature, his

insignificant power over it; the proletarian's poverty is created by social relations. One who does not understand that should refrain from entering into arguments on the economy of civilised societies, a subject on which he will say nothing but the old stuff and nonsense.

We might cite several more examples from *The Sociological Foundations of History* to reveal the author's total incompetence in the economic realm. We see no need to do that, since the example we have quoted is sufficiently telling. We shall only ask the reader: can much that really makes sense be said on the question of mankind's historical development by an economic materialist who understands next to nothing in the field of economics? Probably very little.

If the laws of socio-historical development are rooted in human nature, then mankind cannot rid itself of its subordination to them, just as it cannot mount its own back.

Whether or not mankind is aware that such laws exist, it should at least follow them in its development.

It was thus that the philosophers of history usually regarded the laws of social development they formulated. Saint-Simon likened his law of the three phases to Providence, against which man's will is powerless.

The dialectical materialists look in quite a different way upon the laws they have indicated. In their opinion, these laws are rooted not in human nature but in the nature of the social relations people enter into at various stages of the development of the productive forces.

Until now, people have entered into such relations quite unconsciously; such relations have been the product of *necessity*, not of *free, i.e., reasonable and purposeful* human action. But it is sufficient for people to understand the cause of their dependence on their own productive forces for them to subordinate the latter to their will and reason. What is repeated here is the same that we see in man's relations to Nature. While he is ignorant of the forces of Nature, he obeys them blindly, but once he has grasped them, the forces of Nature obey him.

Of course, that is no trifling condition—to understand the cause of his subordination to his own productive forces. It is a very difficult task.

But what is already important is that its accomplishment is possible at present—not only *possible* but quite *inevitable*. For example, consider such things as *crises*. In them, man's dependence on the blind forces of economic relations finds expression perhaps more stridently than anywhere else. But the more formidably that dependence is expressed, the more clearly its present-day cause reveals itself, namely, *the absence of organisation*

in production. People see that cause, and grapple with it. Some try to overcome it, while remaining within the framework of the old relations, by creating "trade unions". Others go still further and gain a deeper understanding of the matter: they try to eliminate the old relations so as thereby to completely subordinate the economy to man's reason-enlightened will. It is thus that this struggle—one between light and darkness, between reason and necessity—is already being waged and—what is most important cannot but be waged; were people to decide to give up that struggle now, they would be prevented by economic necessity itself: its shattering blows would soon arouse the inert populations of the present-day civilised countries. As we can see, the kind of subordination of men to social laws which is spoken of by the dialectical materialists differs substantially from the subordination spoken of by thinkers who held the viewpoint of human nature. It may be said that some began on an optimistic note and ended on a lugubrious one, while others begin on a mournful note and end up with paeans. Some begin with freedom and end up with necessity, while others who begin with necessity arrive at freedom. It is in the latter's theory, and only there, i.e., only in dialectical materialism, that there is no trace of fanaticism.

With his total lack of understanding of present-day dialectical materialism, Lacombe does not even suspect that the triumph of human reason over the blind force of economic necessity is possible. His "economic" materialism consists, as we have seen, in the conviction that man's economic needs speak more urgently and imperatively than all the others. But however correct this idea may be, it does not follow therefrom that people are doomed to remain for ever the slaves of their own social economy. A reasonable and planned organisation of social production will ensure the satisfaction of man's "bodily needs", in the same way as the "need to breathe" is ensured by Nature itself under *all and any* social relations. Therefore bodily needs will cease from playing, in the mutual relations of people, the vast role they indubitably play at present, when their satisfaction is dependent on the chaotic play of fortuities. However, this consideration does not even occur to Lacombe, for whom capitalist production is the only acceptable system. As he sees it, civilised humanity's "bodily needs" cannot be satisfied otherwise than within the system of capitalist relations. Therefore, the kind of human nature he has in mind is in fact nothing but the *nature of the capitalist order*, and since that nature is repulsive, Lacombe's "man in general" is an unattractive creature too. Lacombe's "economic" materialism is in a certain sense a *lampoon against the human race*. Fortunately, *this kind of materialism* is nothing but the outcome of a

misunderstanding, of the backwardness of our author's scientific concepts.

There are pages in Lacombe's book which must have attracted special attention from Russian readers. I am referring to these pages that speak of *the role of the "individual" in history*. In his opinion, that role is exceedingly important. He is in no agreement with thinkers who would reduce everything to the operation of general causes. "Place Frederick at the head of the Prussians vanquished at Jena",⁸⁹ he says "and take away Napoleon from the French, and who will believe that the course of events would have remained the same? Assuredly, no soldier will" (p. 22). Those who say that great men merely express the aspirations of their times are mistaken. Many historical innovations have been introduced by great men in the absence of any sympathy on the part of their environment. "Mahomet began by meeting about himself a general and outspoken hostility; he finally involved in a holy war a people that at first had felt no ardour for it" (pp. 24-25). "We are well aware," Lacombe continues, "that institutions, or the crowd, or the environment, which means one and the same thing, operate on a vast scale. We hold, however, that by their particular nature, good or evil, by their faculties, outstanding or insignificant, historical personages, who head institutions and give them guidance, also have a part to play in the action, and that such action is not always annulled, does not necessarily leave no consequence" (p. 22).

The individual brings an element of the fortuitous into history. All this is very much to the liking of our great, medium and petty "personalities", who wax indignant at the very idea that they can be mere instruments of the historical advance. Such "personalities" have nothing against serving history, but they want the latter to feel—this in the person of its philosophers—that the service they render is voluntary, and that without them history would often have a poor time of it. Such "personalities", who demand of history, if not devotion then at least respect, will hasten to agree with Lacombe, and use him to reproach the "dissidents": here you have before you a man who is also an economic materialist, yet there is far less sinfulness in him. In this case, however, just as in others, Lacombe is not much of a mainstay. His arguments lack conviction and testify that he, not so stupid a man after all—lacks the faculty of *philosophical* thinking.

It is quite possible that the battle of Jena would have ended differently if the French had not been commanded by Napoleon. It is even more probable that it would not have ended as it did if the French soldier of the early years of this century had been no better than his counterpart of the times of Louis XV; this, on the one hand, would seem to show that it all depends on "per-

sonalities" (of whom an army, for instance, is made up), but, on the other hand, it leads us up directly to the old question: why is it that the "personalities" of one period do not resemble those of another? This question cannot be settled otherwise than through an analysis of the social relations peculiar to various historical periods.*

It is also true that many innovations have been undertaken by great men "in the absence of any sympathy on the part of their environment". Such an objection, however, can only place difficulties in the way of the idealists, to whom Lacombe also belongs despite his "economic materialism". If history can be explained by psychology, then it is clear that great historical figures who towered above their milieu have brought something of their own into history, something that did not previously exist in that environment. From the viewpoint of the dialectical materialists, however, that is not the case. By the characteristics of the social environment they understand, first and foremost, the properties of the *social relations* people enter into at each given stage in the development of their productive forces. The psychology of the environment comes only after that and as a consequence of those relations. In that case, the activities of great historical figures do not contain any "residue" that cannot be explained by means of the properties of the social environment, which are reflected better and more clearly in the mind of a great man. That is why such a man can enter into a temporary contradiction with the "crowd", who, however, under the influence of the selfsame social relations, gradually go over to the side of the "hero". The author of *A System of Acquired Rights*⁹⁰ had a better understanding of the German workers' condition than those workers themselves had, which was why they sometimes jeered at the author of *A System of Acquired Rights*; however, the properties of the environment—the economic relations in Germany—soon convinced the progressive section of the German workers that this man, the boldness of whose views had at first taken them aback, was right. There was nothing more to it than that. This "*ultimate outcome*" contains absolutely nothing unamenable to analysis from the viewpoint of the logic of social relations.

Anyone who contrasts great men's historical activities with the operation of social laws resembles (even if *this contraposition*

* It goes without saying that, in the battle of Jena, for instance, Napoleon's role did not resemble that of any random French private. But what follows from that? In the human organism, the function of the brain does not resemble that of the toes. It is indubitably more important. That, however, does not prove that the function of the brain cannot be explained by the general laws of physiology.

should assume with him, as with Lacombe, the appearance of *subtraction*) that character in Saltykov-Shchedrin who presented himself with the dilemma: "*Either the law, or I*", and demanded that the dilemma should be solved directly, without deviating to the right or the left.

Yet we would advise a careful reading of *The Sociological Foundations of History*. Though its author is most retrograde, among the blind the one-eyed is king. After all, Lacombe looks upon things more reasonably than many Russian "sociologists" do. And since Mr. Pavlenkov has decided to publish his book, more attention should have been given to the translation, which *leaves much to be desired*.

ON THE MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

I

(*Essais sur la conception matérialiste de l'histoire* par Antonio Labriola, professeur à l'université de Rome, avec une préface de G. Sorel, Paris, 1897).

We must confess to the considerable prejudice with which we took up this book by a Rome Professor: we had been scared by some writings of several compatriots of his, for instance, A. Loria (see especially his *La teoria economica della costituzione politica*). However, the first pages of the book convinced us that we were wrong, and that Achille Loria is one thing, and Antonio Labriola is another. On completing its reading, we felt a desire to speak about it with the Russian reader, who, we hope, will not reproach us for it. After all,

Worthwhile books are not too plentiful!

Labriola's *Essais* first appeared in Italian: the French translation is pedestrian and, in places, even poor. We say that with confidence, although we do not have the Italian original at our disposal. However, the Italian author cannot be held responsible for the French translator. In any case, Labriola's thoughts can be understood even in the clumsy French translation. Let us examine them.

Mr. Kareyev, who is known to be very diligent in reading and most successful in distorting any "work" with the least bearing on the *materialist understanding* of history, will probably number our author among the "*economic materialists*".¹ That will be mistaken. Labriola adheres firmly and quite consistently to the materialist understanding of history, but he does not consider himself an "economic materialist". In his opinion, that designation is more suited to writers like the well-known T. Rogers than to himself and his fellow-thinkers. This is most true, though perhaps not quite clear at first glance.

Ask any Populist or subjectivist² what "economic materialist" means, and he will reply: it means one who attributes to the economic factor predominant significance in social life. That is how our Populists and subjectivists understand economic materialism.

It must be admitted that there do undoubtedly exist people who attribute to the economic "factor" a predominant role in the life of human societies. Mr. Mikhailovsky has more than once made mention of Louis Blanc, who spoke of the predominance of this factor far earlier than a certain teacher of certain Russian disciples.⁹² There is something we do not understand: why is it that our most worthy subjective sociologist has made Louis Blanc his choice? He should have known that, in the respect that interests us, Louis Blanc had many precursors: Guizot, Mignet, Augustin Thierry and Tocqueville all recognised the predominant role of the economic "factor", at least in the history of the Middle Ages and more recent times. Consequently, all these historians were economic materialists. In our time, the above-mentioned T. Rogers in his book, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, has also shown himself a convinced economic materialist; he, too, has acknowledged the predominant significance of the economic "factor". Of course, it does not hence follow that T. Rogers's socio-political views have been identical with those of Louis Blanc, for instance. Rogers adheres to the viewpoint of the bourgeois economy, while Louis Blanc was once a representative of utopian socialism. Had Rogers been questioned on his opinion of the bourgeois economic order, he would have replied that the fundamental features of human nature underlie that order, and that consequently the history of its inception is that of the gradual removal of the obstacles that once hampered the manifestation of those features and even precluded that order. For his part, Louis Blanc would have declared that capitalism itself is one of the obstacles ignorance and violence have erected along the road towards the establishment of an economic order that will at last be really in keeping with human nature. As you see, this is quite a substantial difference. Which of them stands closer to the truth? Frankly speaking, we are of the opinion that both these writers are almost equally far from it, though we would not like to, and cannot, dwell on this matter. Something quite different interests us here. We would ask the reader to note that, to both Louis Blanc and Rogers, the economic factor, which predominates in social life, was itself, as mathematics puts it, a *function* of human nature and, in the main, of human intellect and knowledge. The same must also be said of the above-mentioned French historians of the Restoration period. But, then, how should we designate the historical views of people, who, though they assert that the economic factor predominates in social life, are at the same time convinced that this factor—i.e., society's economy—is in its turn the fruit of human knowledge and concepts? Such views cannot be called anything else but *idealistic*. It follows that *economic materialism does not yet*

preclude historical idealism. Yet this wording is not precise enough; we have said: does not yet preclude idealism, but what should be said is: *has perhaps been, and most frequently still is, a simple variety of it.* After this, it is clear why people like Antonio Labriola do not admit to being economic materialists: it is *for the very reason that they are consistent materialists*, and for the very reason that *their historical views are the diametrical opposite of historical idealism.*

II

"However," Mr. Kudrin will probably say to us, "you are resorting, after the custom of many 'disciples', to paradoxes, playing with words, making use of blinds, and actually doing some sword-swallowing. With you, the idealists have emerged as economic materialists. In that case, however, how would you have us understand the genuine and consistent materialists? Can it be true that they reject the idea of the predominance of the economic factor? Do they really recognise that, alongside of that factor, others also operate in history, so that we should not waste time trying to discover which of these dominates the others? One cannot but be glad for the genuine and consistent materialists if they are indeed not given to thrusting the economic factor on other people."

We shall reply to Mr. Kudrin that the genuine and consistent materialists are indeed not given to always thrusting the economic factor on others. Moreover, the very question of which factor is predominant in social life does not carry much weight with them. However, Mr. Kudrin should be in no hurry to give vent to joy. It has not been under the influence of the Populists and the subjectivists that genuine and consistent materialists have arrived at that conviction. They, the genuine and consistent materialists, can only laugh at the objections such gentlemen offer to the idea of the predominance of the economic factor. Besides, the Populists and the subjectivists are somewhat late with these objections. The irrelevance of the question as to which factor dominates social life has become very obvious since Hegel's times. *Hegelian* idealism has precluded the very possibility of such questions. The more so has it been precluded by our contemporary dialectical materialism. Ever since the appearance of *Kritik der kritischen Kritik*, and especially since the publication of the well-known book *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*,⁹³ only those with little knowledge of theory have brought themselves to wrangle over the relative significance of various socio-historical factors. We know that our words will surprise others besides Mr. Kudrin, which is why we hasten to provide the appropriate explanations.

But what is meant by socio-historical factors? How has the concept arisen?

Let us consider an example. The Gracchus brothers wanted to put an end to the grabbing of public lands by the Roman magnates, a process that was ruinous to Rome. The rich were opposed to the brothers, and in the struggle that arose each of the contending parties passionately pursued their ends. If I wished to describe this struggle, I could present it as a clash of human passions, which thus might emerge as "factors" in the internal history of Rome. However, both the Gracchi and their opponents resorted to those means of struggle that were provided by Roman public law. Of course I shall not lose sight of that fact in my story, so that Roman public law will also prove a factor in the internal development of the Roman Republic. Further: those who were locked in struggle with the Gracchi were materially interested in the preservation of a deeply entrenched abuse. Those who supported the Gracchi were materially interested in its eradication. I shall also point to this circumstance, in consequence of which the struggle I am describing will be that of the material interests, a struggle between classes, between the poor and the rich. Consequently, what we have here is a third factor and this time the most interesting of them all—the celebrated economic factor. If, my dear reader, you have the time and the wish, you can expatiate on the theme of which particular factor in Rome's internal development predominated over all the others: you will find in my historical essay sufficient data to back up any opinion on that score.

As for myself, I shall not depart from my role of an ordinary narrator, and shall not get worked up over any of the factors. I am in no wise interested in their comparative importance. I have only one object as a narrator—to describe certain events as precisely and as interestingly as possible, for which I must establish a certain if only external link between them and arrange them in a certain perspective. If I make mention of the passions that agitated the opposing sides, or of the then state structure of Rome, or, finally, of the existence there of inequality in property, I do so exclusively for the sake of a coherent and lively description of the events. I shall probably feel quite satisfied if I achieve that aim, and with indifference shall leave it to the philosophers to deal with the question of whether passions dominate the economy or vice versa, or, finally, whether nothing dominates anything else, since each and every "factor" follows the golden rule: live and let live.

That is how it will all be if I do not depart from my role of a simple narrator, one who eschews any predilection for the florid. But what will happen if I do not limit myself to that role and

embark on philosophising on the events I describe? In that case, I shall not be satisfied with the external nexus between events, but shall wish to uncover their inner causes, so that those factors—human passions, public law, and the economy—which I previously set off and brought forward, guided almost exclusively by my artistic instinct, will now acquire a vast new significance for me. I shall see them just as those inner causes, those “hidden forces”, to whose influence the events can be ascribed. I shall create a theory of factors.

Some variety of such a theory must indeed appear wherever people interested in social phenomena go over from simple contemplation and description to an investigation into the link connecting them.

Besides, the theory of factors grows together with the greater division of labour in social science. After all, the branches of that science—ethics, politics, law, political economy and so on—all examine one and the same thing: the activities of social man, but do so each from its particular point of view. Mr. Mikhailovsky would say that each of them is “in charge of” some particular “string”.⁹⁴ Each “string” can be considered as a factor of social development. Indeed we can now enumerate almost as many factors as there exist separate “disciplines” in social science.

We hope that now, after what has just been said, it is perfectly clear what is meant by socio-historical factors, and how the concept of them has appeared.

A socio-historical factor is an *abstraction*, the concept of which emerges from the *process of abstraction*. Thanks to the latter, the various *aspects* of the social *whole* acquire an appearance of particular *categories*, while the various manifestations and expressions of social man’s activities—morals, law, economic forms, etc.—turn in our minds into special forces which seem to have evoked and conditioned those activities, and are their ultimate causes.

Since the theory of factors has arisen, disputes are bound to appear as to which particular factor should be recognised as predominant.

III

A certain interaction exists between these “factors”: each of them affects all the others and, in its turn, experiences the influence of all the rest. The outcome is such an intricate network of mutual influences, direct operations and reflected impacts that anyone who tries to grasp the course of social development will find his head in a whirl and will feel an irresistible need to find some kind of thread so as to escape from this labyrinth. Since bitter experience has convinced him that the viewpoint of interaction will produce nothing but giddiness, he searches for some

other point of view, in an attempt to simplify his task. He asks himself whether any particular socio-historical factor is the first and main cause of the appearance of all the rest. Were he able to find some positive solution of this question, his task would indeed become incomparably simpler. Let us assume that he has arrived at the conclusion that all the social relations in any particular country, in their inception and development, are conditioned by the course of its intellectual advance, which, in its turn, is determined by the properties of human nature (the idealist point of view). He will then find an easy escape from the vicious circle of interaction, and will create a more or less harmonious and consistent theory of social development. Later on, as a result of a further study of the subject, he will see that he may have been mistaken, and that man's intellectual development cannot be considered the prime cause of all social progress. Cognizant of his error, he will probably notice that there was some benefit in his temporary conviction that the intellectual factor dominates all the others, so that, without that conviction, he would have been unable to escape from the deadlock of interaction and take a single step towards an understanding of social phenomena.

It would be an injustice to condemn such attempts to establish some kind of hierarchy in the factors of socio-historical development. In their time, these were just as necessary as was the inevitability of the appearance of the factors theory itself. Antonio Labriola, who has made a more complete and profound analysis of this theory than any other materialist writer, is most justified in saying that "the historical factors ... are something far less than the truth but far more than simple error in the gross sense of a blunder or illusion". The theory of factors has made a useful contribution to science. "Like any other empirical study that does not go beyond the apparent movement of things, the special study of historico-social factors has served to perfect the instruments of observation and permitted the discovery, in the phenomena themselves as artificially abstracted, of stepping stones that link them with the social complex." At present, some acquaintance with the special social sciences is essential to anyone who would wish to re-create some part of mankind's past. Historical science would have made little headway without philology. And how numerous have been the services rendered to science by the one-sided Romanists, who considered Roman law human reason in writing?

No matter how valid and useful the theory of factors may have been in its time, it does not stand up to any criticism today. It splits up social man's activities, converting their various aspects and manifestations into special forces that allegedly determine

society's historical advance. This theory has played the same role in the history of the development of social science as did the theory of individual physical forces in natural science. The successes of natural science have led up to the doctrine of the *unity* of those forces, and to the present-day doctrine of energy. In exactly the same way, the successes scored in social science had to bring about the replacement of the theory of factors, that outcome of social analysis, by the *synthetic view on social life*.

The synthetic view on social life is not peculiar to present-day dialectical materialism. We find it already in Hegel, who saw his task in a scientific explanation of all the socio-historical process, taken in its entirety, i.e., incidentally with all those aspects and manifestations of social man's activities which people given to abstract thinking saw as individual factors. However, in his capacity of "absolute idealist", Hegel attributed social man's activities to the properties of the Universal Spirit. If those properties are given, then the entire history of mankind is given *an sich*, as are its ultimate results. Hegel's synthetic view was at the same time a *teleological one*. Modern dialectical materialism has finally eliminated teleology⁹⁵ from social science.

It has shown that men make their history, not so as to march along a predestined road of progress or because they must obey the laws of some kind of abstract (or metaphysical, according to Labriola) evolution. They make it in a striving to satisfy their needs, and it is the business of science to explain to us how the various ways of satisfying those needs affect people's social relations and their spiritual activities.

The ways of satisfying social man's needs, and, in considerable measure, those needs themselves are determined by the properties of the tools with the aid of which he subordinates Nature to himself in greater or lesser degree; in other words, they are determined by the condition of his productive forces. Any considerable change in the state of those forces is also reflected in men's social relations, i.e., incidentally, in their economic relations. To the idealists of all shades and varieties, economic relations have been a function of *human nature*; the dialectical materialists consider those relations a function of the *social productive forces*.

Hence it follows that if the dialectical materialists have considered it permissible to speak of the factors of social development otherwise than with the purpose of criticising these out-moded fictions, they have had, first and foremost, to bring to the notice of the so-called *economic* materialists the *mutability* of their "predominant" factor; the more recent materialists have no knowledge of any economic order that is alone in keeping with human nature, while all other kinds of economic social orders are the consequence of greater or lesser violence done

to it. According to the doctrine of the more recent materialists, *any* economic system that corresponds to the state of the productive forces in a given period is in keeping with human nature. Conversely, any economic system begins to contradict the demands of human nature as soon as it runs counter to the state of the productive forces. Thus, the "predominant" factor itself proves *subordinated* to another "factor". Well, after that, how can it be "*predominant*"?

If all that is so, then it is clear that a gulf separates the dialectical materialists and those who can with good reason be called *economic* materialists. But to which school of thought are we to refer those unpleasant disciples of the not quite pleasant teacher against whom Messrs Kareyev, N. Mikhailovsky, S. Krivenko and other clever and learned men were so recently launching such fervid though not very fortunate attacks? If we are not mistaken, the "disciples" stood squarely on the platform of dialectical materialism. Why is it that Messrs Kareyev, N. Mikhailovsky, S. Krivenko, and other clever and learned men have ascribed to them views held by the *economic* materialists, and have fulminated against them for their having allegedly ascribed exaggerated significance to the economic factor. It may be supposed that these clever and learned men have acted so because the arguments employed by the economic materialists of blessed memory can be more easily refuted than those adduced by the dialectical materialists. It may further be supposed that our learned opponents of the disciples have failed to assimilate their views. The latter supposition is even more probable.

The objection may be raised that the "disciples" themselves sometimes call themselves economic materialists and that the term "economic materialism" was first used by one of the French "disciples".⁹⁶ That is so, but neither the French nor the Russian disciples have ever linked with the term "economic materialism" the idea our Populists and subjectivists associate with it. It will suffice to recall that, in Mr. N. Mikhailovsky's opinion, Louis Blanc and Mr. Y. Zhukovsky have been the same kind of "economic materialists" as our present-day adherents of the materialist view of history are. Confusion of ideas can go no further than that.

IV

In eliminating all and every teleology from social science, and explaining social man's activities by his needs and by the means and modes of satisfying them in a given period, dialectical materialism* has for the first time given that science the "rigour" on

* Labriola calls this materialism *historical*, a term borrowed from Engels.

which its sister—the science of Nature—has often plumed itself. It may be said that the science of society is itself becoming a *natural* science: “notre doctrine naturaliste d’histoire”, as Labriola has so neatly put it. But that does not at all mean that to him the sphere of biology merges with that of social science. Labriola is a vehement opponent of “*political and social Darwinism*”, which has for years, “like an epidemic, infected the minds of many thinkers and especially many advocates and declaimers of sociology” and, as a vogue, has affected even the daily language of practical politicians.

Without any doubt, man is an animal connected with other animals by ties of kinship. In origin, he is no privileged creature; his physiology is nothing more than a particular instance of general physiology. In the beginning, he, like other animals, was entirely subject to the influence of his natural habitat which had not yet undergone his modifying impact; he was obliged to adapt himself to it in his struggle for existence. In Labriola’s opinion, the appearance of races was the outcome of this—*direct*—adaptation to the natural environment, inasmuch as races differ from one another in physical characteristics, e.g., the white, black and yellow races, and do not present any secondary historico-social systems, i.e., nations and peoples. Primitive social instincts and the beginnings of sexual selection appeared as the same kind of outcome of the adaptation to the natural environment in the struggle for existence.

However, we can only surmise as to what “primitive man” must have been like. Those who inhabit the Earth at present, like those previously studied by trustworthy scholars, are a far cry from the times when animal life, in the proper sense of the phrase, ended for mankind. Thus, for instance, the Iroquois, with their gens materna—so well studied and described by Morgan—have made comparatively great strides along the road of *social* development. Even the Australians of today not only possess a language—which may be called the condition and instrument, the cause and effect of sociality—and are not only familiar with the use of fire but live in communities with a definite structure, customs and institutions. The Australian tribe has its own territory and possesses its own hunting devices; it has certain weapons of defence and attack, certain utensils for the storage of their supplies, and certain ways of adorning their bodies; in short, the Australian now lives in a certain *artificial* if very elementary environment, to which he adapts himself from early childhood. This artificial or social environment is an essential condition of any further progress. The degree of savagery and barbarism of any particular tribe depends on the degree of this environment’s development.

This primary social system corresponds to what is known as mankind's *pre-historical life*. The onset of historical life presupposes a higher development of the artificial environment and man's far greater mastery over Nature. The complex internal relations in communities that have taken to the road of historical development are in no way conditioned by the direct influence of the natural environment, but presuppose the invention of certain tools, the domestication of some animals, the ability to extract some metals, and the like. These means and modes of production changed in a variety of ways in different circumstances; in them, one can see progress, stagnation or even retrogression, but such changes have never returned men to the purely animal life, i.e., to life under the direct influence of the natural environment.

"Historical science has as its prime and main object the determination and the study of this artificial environment—its origin, ... its changes and its transformations. To say that all this is nothing but a part and extension of Nature means saying something which, in its excessively abstract and generic character, lacks all meaning."*

No less negative than to "political and social Darwinism" is Labriola's attitude to the efforts of certain "amiable dilettantes" to blend the materialist understanding of history with the general theory of evolution, which, as he so pungently and truly puts it, has been turned by so many people into a simple metaphysical metaphor. He also ridicules the naive condescension of the "amiable dilettantes", who attempt to place the materialist understanding of history under the protection of the philosophy of Auguste Comte or Spencer: "That means that they would give us as allies our most sworn enemies," he says.

The remark concerning the dilettantes evidently refers incidentally to Professor Enrico Ferri, the author of a highly superficial work *Spencer, Darwin and Marx*, published in a French translation under the title of *Socialisme et science positive*.

V

Thus, in their striving to satisfy their needs, men make their own history. Of course, these needs are originally set by Nature, but are then considerably modified quantitatively and qualitatively by the properties of men's artificial environment. The productive forces at men's disposal determine all their social relations. It is primarily the state of the productive forces that determines the relations entered into by men in the social process of produc-

* *Essays*, p. 144.

tion, i.e., their *economic relations*. The latter naturally create certain interests, which find expression in *law*. "...Any legal norm has always been a defence ... of a definite interest," says Labriola. The development of the productive forces brings about the division of society into classes, whose interests are not only different but are in many respects—and in the most substantial of these—diametrically opposed. This opposedness of interests gives rise to hostile clashes between social classes, a struggle between them. The struggle leads to the replacements of the *clan* organisation by that of the *State*, the latter's task being to preserve the dominant interests. Finally, on the basis of the social relations determined by a given state of the productive forces, there emerges conventional *morality*, i.e., that morality which usually guides people in their ordinary and everyday practice.

Thus, law, the State structure and the morality of any given people are *immediately* and *directly* conditioned by their economic relations. It is the same relations that condition—but now *indirectly* and *mediately*—everything that is created by thought and imagination: art, science and the like.

To understand the history of scientific thought or the history of art in any country, a knowledge of its economy is not enough. What is needed is the ability to go over from the economy to *social psychology*, without a careful study and understanding of which a materialist explanation of the history of ideologies is impossible. That, of course, does not mean that there exists some kind of social soul, or the collective "spirit" of a people, one that develops according to its own specific laws and is expressed in social life. "That is pure mysticism," says Labriola. In this case, the materialist can have in view only the predominant temper of the sentiments and minds of a given social class in a definite country and at a particular time. That state of mind and sentiment is the outcome of social relations. Labriola is firmly convinced that it is not the forms of men's consciousness that determine the forms of their social being, but, on the contrary, it is the forms of their social being that determine the forms of their consciousness. However, once they have arisen on the basis of social being, the forms of human consciousness become part of history. Historical science cannot limit itself only to society's economic anatomy; it deals with *the totality of phenomena directly or indirectly* conditioned by the social economy, including the operation of the imagination. No historical fact exists that does not owe its origin to the social economy; it is no less true that no historical fact exists that is not preceded, accompanied or followed by a definite state of the consciousness. Hence the vast importance of social psychology. If the latter has to be considered already in the history of law and political institutions, then no

step can be taken without it in the history of literature, art, philosophy and so on.

When we say that a given work is fully in the spirit of, for instance, the Renaissance, that means it is fully in keeping with the predominant temper of those classes which called the tune in social life. Society's psychology does not change until a change takes place in the social relations. People become accustomed to certain beliefs, certain concepts, certain intellectual devices, and certain ways of satisfying definite aesthetic needs. But if the development of the productive forces leads up to any substantial changes in society's economic structure and, in consequence, in the relations between social classes, then the psychology of those classes also undergoes change, and, together with that psychology, so do the "spirit of the times" and the "character of the people". This change is expressed in the appearance of new religious beliefs or new philosophical concepts, new trends in art or new aesthetic needs.

As Labriola sees it, one should also take into account that a very important part is played in ideologies by the influence of concepts and trends inherited from forebears and preserved only in tradition. Besides, the influence of Nature also affects ideologies.

As we have already seen, the influence of Nature on social man changes under the impact of the artificial environment. From a *direct* influence, it becomes *mediated*, but it does not cease to exist. The temperament of any people has preserved certain features created by the influence of the natural environment, features which undergo certain changes but are not fully effaced by adaptation to the social milieu. These features of a people's temperament comprise what is known as *race*. The latter indubitably exerts an influence on the history of certain ideologies, for instance, of art. This circumstance makes any scientific explanation, which is no easy matter as it is, even more difficult.

VI

We have given a quite detailed and, we hope, precise account of Labriola's views regarding the dependence of social phenomena on society's economic structure which, in its turn, is conditioned by the state of its productive forces. In the main, we are in complete agreement with him but, in part, his views have given rise to certain doubts in us, in which connection we would like to make several observations.

Here is the first of them. According to Labriola, the state is an organisation of one social class's domination over another or others. That is true, but it hardly expresses the entire truth. In such states as China or ancient Egypt, where civilised life was impos-

sible without very complex and extensive work of controlling the currents and overflow of big rivers and organising irrigation, the rise of the State can be attributed in a most considerable degree to the direct effect of the needs of the socio-productive process. No doubt inequality already existed there in pre-historical times and, in one degree or another, both *within* the tribes, comprising a State and often quite distinct in their ethnic origins and *between* tribes. However, the ruling classes to be met in the history of these countries assumed their more or less superior social status as a result of a state organisation engendered by the requirements of the socio-productive process. There can hardly be any doubt that the supremacy of the Egyptian priestly caste was due to the tremendous importance their embryonic scientific information had for the entire system of Egyptian agriculture.* In the West, to which Greece of course also pertains, we do not see the impact of the immediate needs of the social process of production (of a kind that presupposes some extensive social organisation) on the rise of the State. But there, too, its inception should be ascribed in considerable measure to the necessity of the social division of labour, created by the development of society's productive forces. This circumstance did not, of course, prevent the state from being at the same time an organisation for the rule of a privileged minority over a more or less enslaved majority.** It should not at all be lost sight of in order to preclude any false or one-sided concepts of the historical role of the state.

And now let us deal with Labriola's views on the historical development of ideologies. In his opinion, as we have seen, that development is complicated by the operation of racial features, and in general by the influence exerted on men by their natural surroundings. It is much to be regretted that our author has not found it necessary to back up this opinion and illustrate it with examples; we would have understood him with greater ease. At all events, it cannot be doubted that it is unacceptable in the way it has been presented.

The Redskin tribes of America do not, of course, belong to the same race as the tribes that inhabited the Greek archipelago or

* As a Chaldean king said of himself: "I have studied the secrets of rivers for men's good.... I have brought river water to the wilderness; with it I have filled the dried-up ditches.... I have irrigated the barren plains, I have given them fertility and plenty. I have made of them an abode of happiness." This is a true if boastful description of the role played by the Oriental state in the organisation of the social process of production.

** Just as it does not prevent it, in some cases, from being the outcome of the conquest of one people by another. The role of force is very great in the replacement of some institutions by others. However, force is no explanation of the very possibility of that substitution, or of its social results.

the shores of the Baltic Sea in prehistorical times. There can be no doubt that primitive man came under the highly specific influence of his natural environment in each of these areas. It might have been expected that the difference in these influences should have been reflected in the works of embryonic art produced by the primitive inhabitants of these parts of the world. However, we do not see that. In all parts of the world, however different they may be, similar stages in the development of primitive man went hand in hand with similar levels in the development of art. We know Stone Age art and Iron Age art, but we are not aware of the art of different races—white, yellow, etc. The state of the productive forces is reflected even in small things. At first, we see, for instance, only straight and broken lines on pottery: squares, crosses, zigzags, and so on. This kind of ornament was borrowed by primitive art from even more primitive crafts such as weaving and wicker-work. In the Bronze Age, together with the working of metals capable of assuming all kinds of geometrical shapes, there appeared curvilinear decorations; finally, with the domestication of animals, figures of the latter began to appear, first and foremost, that of the horse.*

True, any depiction of man could not but reflect the influence of racial features on the "ideals of beauty" held by primitive artists. It is common knowledge that any race, especially in the early stages of its social development, considers itself the most handsome and places a high value on those features that distinguish it from other races.** In the first place, however, these features of racial aesthetics—inasmuch as they remain constant—cannot influence the development of art; in the second place, they are firmly established only until a certain time, i.e., in certain conditions. Whenever a given tribe is forced to acknowledge the superiority of another and more developed tribe, its racial self-satisfaction disappears, yielding place to a copying of alien tastes formerly considered ridiculous and sometimes even shameful and repulsive. What takes place in the savage is the same as what, in civilised society, is experienced by the peasant, who at first ridicules the townsman's manners and costumes but then, when urban superiority over the countryside is established and enhanced, tries to adopt them in every possible way.

In going over to historical peoples, we would like to point out, first and foremost, that the word *race* cannot and should not be used in respect of them in general. We do not know a single historical people that can be called a people of pure race; each of them

* Regarding all this, see the introduction to Wilhelm Lübke's history of art (there is a Russian translation).

** Regarding this, see Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, London, 1883, pp. 582-85.

is the outcome of the very lengthy and intensive interbreeding and crossing of various ethnic elements.

In that case, how can one determine the influence of "race" on the history of the ideologies of any people?

At first glance, nothing seems simpler or more correct than the idea of the influence exerted by the natural environment on a people's temperament and, through the latter, on the history of its intellectual and aesthetic development. However, it would suffice for Labriola to recall the history of his own country to realise the erroneousness of that idea. The Italians of today live among the same natural surroundings as the ancient Romans did, yet how little does the "temperament" of the present-day losers to Menelik resemble that of the stern conquerors of Carthage.⁸⁷ If we set about ascribing the history of Italian art, for example, to the Italian temperament, we would very soon be puzzled by the causes of the profound changes that the Italian temperament has in its turn undergone in various times and in different parts of the Apennine Peninsula.

VII

In a note to Book I of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, the author of *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*⁸⁸ wrote the following:

"We shall not say that race has been of no significance whatsoever: the development of the natural and the historical sciences has not yet achieved that precision of analysis for us to say, in most cases and with certainty, that this element is completely absent. Who can tell: perhaps this steel nib contains a particle of platinum? That cannot be definitely denied. One thing is clear: chemical analysis will show that the nib contains a number of particles that are indubitably not platinum, and that the part of its composition that pertains to platinum is absolutely infinitesimal; if that part did exist, it could be practically disregarded.... If it is a matter of practical action, then make use of this particular nib in the way that steel nibs should be used in general. In exactly the same way, pay no attention to a person's race in practical matters; treat him simply as a human being.... Perhaps a people's race has exerted a certain influence on its being in a definite condition and not in another; that cannot be rejected with certainty, for historical analysis has not yet achieved an absolute, mathematical precision; there remains after it, as after any present-day chemical analysis, a very small and even minute residuum, which requires more refined methods of investigation, such that are today beyond the reach of science. That residuum, however, is minute. In the formation of any people's present-day

condition, such a vast role has been played by the operation of circumstances independent of natural racial characteristics that even if such particular qualities have marked some departure from overall human nature, there has been little room for their operation, immeasurably and microscopically little room."

These words came to mind while we were reading Labriola's ideas on the influence of race on the history of mankind's spiritual development. It was from the practical angle that the author of the above-mentioned *Essays* revealed an interest in the question of the significance of race, but what he had to say should also be constantly borne in mind by all who engage in purely theoretical studies. Social science stands to gain very, very much if we finally shed the bad habit of ascribing to race whatever seems to us incomprehensible in the spiritual history of any particular people. Racial characteristics may have had some influence on that history, but such hypothetical influence has probably been so minute that the interests of research call for it to be considered equal to naught, and for features noted in the development of any people to be regarded as the outcome of the specific historical conditions in which that development has taken place, and not as the result of the influence of race. Of course, we shall meet with numerous cases in which we shall be unable to point out which particular conditions have given rise to features we are interested in. Yet what defies scientific analysis today may yield to it tomorrow. References to racial features are inconvenient because they bring research to an end where it should be started. Why is it that the history of French poetry does not resemble the history of poetry in Germany? For a very simple reason: the French temperament was such that the French people could produce neither a Lessing, a Schiller, nor a Goethe. We are grateful for this elucidation; we are now in a position to understand everything.

Of course, Labriola would claim to be very far removed from such explanations, which do not explain anything. And that would be true. Generally speaking, he is well aware of their worthlessness and knows very well from what angle one should approach the solution of problems like the one we have referred to as an example. However, by admitting that the spiritual development of peoples is complicated by their racial features, 'he has thereby risked misleading his readers and revealed a readiness to make, if only in insignificant particulars, certain concessions to the old way of thought, which have been injurious to social science. Our remarks are directed against such concessions.

It is not without reason that we call outmoded the view we are questioning regarding the role of race in the history of ideologies. That view is simply a variant of a theory which was widespread

in the last century, and attributed the entire course of history to the properties of human nature. The materialist understanding of history is wholly incompatible with that theory. According to the new view, the nature of social man changes together with the *social relations*. Consequently, the general features of human nature are incapable of explaining history. An ardent and convinced adherent of the materialist understanding of history, Labriola has nevertheless also recognised—true, in a certain and very small measure—the correctness of the old view. It is! with good reason that the Germans say: Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen. In recognising the correctness of the old view in one instance, Labriola had to do the same in some other instances. It goes without saying that this conjunction of two opposing views was bound to impair the coherence of his world-outlook.

VIII

The organisation of any particular society is determined by the state of its productive forces. Sooner or later, a change in that state must inevitably lead to a change in the social organisation as well. Consequently, the latter is in unstable equilibrium wherever society's productive forces are developing. Labriola is quite right in noting that this instability, together with the social movements and the struggle of social classes which it engenders, preserves men from intellectual stagnancy. Antagonism is the mainspring of progress, he says, repeating an idea expressed by a very well-known German economist.⁹⁹ However, he immediately makes a reservation. It would be highly mistaken to imagine, he thinks, that people are always and in all cases fully aware of their condition, and clearly see the social tasks set them by that condition. "To think so," he says, "means supposing something improbable, moreover, something that has never existed."

We would ask the reader to mark this reservation. Labriola goes on to develop his idea as follows:

"Legal forms, political action and attempts to set up a particular social organisation have been, as they still are, sometimes successful and sometimes mistaken, i.e., disproportionate and unsuited to a situation. History is full of errors, which means that if everything in it was necessary in the conditions of relative intelligence in those charged with resolving a difficulty or finding a solution for a given problem ... if everything there has a sufficient reason, then everything in it was not reasonable in the sense given to the word by the optimists. In the long run the determining causes of all changes, i.e., the modified economic conditions have led to the discovery, sometimes along fairly tortuous roads, of due forms of law, a political order and modes more

or less adapted to the new social accommodation. It should not, however, be thought that the thinking animals's instinctive sagacity has manifested itself, *sic et simpliciter*, in a full and clear understanding of all situations, and that it only remains for us to infer all the rest from the economic situation, along the road of deduction. Ignorance, which in its turn can be explained, is an important reason for the manner in which history is made; to ignorance should be added bestiality, which is never completely vanquished, and all the passions and all the injustices, and the diverse forms of corruption which have always been the necessary product of a society organised in such a way that the domination of man by man is inevitable, and that under such domination, falsehood, hypocrisy, audacity and baseness have always been inseparable. Without being utopians, we can foresee, and we do indeed foresee, the appearance of a society which, developing from present-day society, and from its very contrasts, in accordance with the ... laws of historical development, will lead to an association without class antagonisms: this will have as its consequence a regulated production that will eliminate from life the element of chance, which till now has been a multiform cause of all kinds of accidents and incidents. This, however, is a matter of the future, not of the present or the past.”*

Much of all this is very true but, fancifully intertwined with error, truth has here assumed the appearance of a paradox that is not quite felicitous.

Labriola is quite right when he says that people do not always have a clear understanding of their social condition, and are not always fully aware of the social tasks that ensue therefrom. But when, on that basis, he refers to ignorance or superstition as the historical cause for the appearance of many forms of community life and many customs, he is returning unawares to the standpoint of the eighteenth-century Enlighteners. Before naming ignorance as an important cause explaining “the manner in which history is made”, one should determine in which particular sense the word is being used here. It would be most erroneous to think that it is self-understood. Indeed, it is not so understandable and simple as it might seem. Consider eighteenth-century France, where all thinking representatives of the third estate were so ardently aspiring towards liberty and equality. For the achievement of that aim, they demanded the abolition of many obsolete social institutions. However, the abolition of such institutions meant the triumph of capitalism, which, as we now know so well, can hardly be called the kingdom of liberty and equality. It may therefore be said that the lofty aim of the

* *Essais*, pp. 183-85.

philosophers of the last century proved beyond their reach. It may also be said that the philosophers were unable to name the means necessary for its achievement, so that they may even be accused of *ignorance*, as many utopian socialists have already done. Labriola himself is amazed by the contradiction between the actual economic trend in France in those times, and the ideals held by her thinkers. "A singular spectacle, and a singular contrast!" he exclaims. But what is singular about it? But what did the French Enlighteners' "ignorance" consist in? Did it consist in their viewing the means for the achievement of universal welfare otherwise than we now do? But there could be no talk of such means at the time: these *had not yet been created* by mankind's historical advance, i.e., to be more correct, by *the development of its productive forces*. Turn the pages of Mably's *Doutes, proposés aux philosophes économistes* or Morelli's *Code de la nature* and you will see that inasmuch as these writers' views differed from those held by the vast majority of the Enlighteners in respect of the conditions for human welfare, and inasmuch as they dreamt of the abolition of private property, they, in the first place, came into glaring contradiction with the most essential and vital needs of the nation in their times, and, in the second place, vaguely aware of that, they themselves considered their aspirations *absolutely impracticable*. Consequently, I ask you again: wherein lay the ignorance of the Enlighteners? Did it consist in the fact that, while being aware of the social needs of their times and correctly indicating how they could be met (through the abolition of the old privileges, and the like), they attributed an extremely exaggerated significance to the methods needed, i.e., the significance of a road towards universal happiness? This was not yet crass ignorance; from the practical point of view, it should even be recognised as quite useful, since the more the Enlighteners believed in the universal significance of the reforms they demanded, the more energetically they had to work for their achievement.

The Enlighteners also displayed unquestionable ignorance in the sense that they were unable to find the link between their views and aspirations, and France's economic condition at the time; they did not even suspect that such a link existed. They regarded themselves as heralds of *absolute* truth. We now know that absolute truth does not exist, that everything is relative and everything depends on the circumstances of place and time, but for that very reason we must exercise great restraint in passing judgement on the "ignorance" existing in different historical periods. Their ignorance, as was revealed in the social movements, aspirations and ideals typical of them, was *also relative*.

IX

How do juridical norms come into being? It may be said that any such norm means the abolition or modification of some old norm or old custom. Why are old norms and old customs abolished? Because they are no longer in keeping with the new "conditions", i.e., the new actual relations that people enter into towards one another in the social process of production. Primitive communism disappeared as a consequence of the growth of the productive forces. The latter, however, develop only gradually, that is why the new actual relations among people in the social process of production develop only in gradual stages. That is why the shackling effect of the old norms or customs grows only gradually, as does the need to give the appropriate *legal* expression to the new *actual* (economic) relations among people. The thinking animal's instinctive sagacity usually follows in the train of such actual changes. If the old legal norms prevent a certain part of society from achieving their everyday aims or meeting their daily needs, then that part of society will without fail and with the greatest ease arrive at an awareness of the handicaps those norms impose: that will call for little more sagacity than is needed for an awareness of the inconvenience of wearing footwear that is too tight, or carrying weapons that are too heavy. There is of course still a long distance between an awareness of the constraint imposed by a definite legal norm and a *conscious striving to get it abolished*. At first, people simply try to circumvent it in each particular instance. One might recall what happened in our big peasant families when the emergence of capitalism in our country led to the appearance of new sources of earnings that were not the same for various members of a family. The customary law then governing family relations became an encumbrance to those who were fortunate enough to earn more than the rest. However, such fortunate people could not bring themselves to rise up so easily and promptly against the old custom. For quite a long time they would simply wriggle to conceal part of their earnings from their elders. However, the new economic order gradually struck deep root, the old family bonds grew ever weaker, family members interested in their abolition became ever more obstreperous, property partition became ever more frequent, and finally, the old custom disappeared, yielding place to a new one brought about by the new conditions, new *actual* relations, and the new *economy* in society.

People's growing awareness of their condition usually lags in greater or lesser measure behind the growth of the new actual relations that modify that condition. Nevertheless, consciousness does follow in the footsteps of the actual relations. Wherever

the conscious striving to abolish outmoded institutions and establish a new legal order is insufficiently developed, that new order has not yet been fully *prepared by the social economy*. In other words, any lack of a clear consciousness—"the miscalculations of immature thinking" or "ignorance"—often denotes, on the historical plane, only one thing: something that has to be realised is as yet still insufficiently developed, namely, the new and *incipient relations*. But ignorance of this kind—a lack of knowledge or understanding of what does not yet exist but is in the process of arising—is obviously only *relative* ignorance.

There exists another kind of ignorance—that in respect of Nature. This may be called *absolute* ignorance, its yardstick being *Nature's power over man*. Since the development of the productive forces signifies *man's growing power over Nature*, it is clear that greater productive forces mean a decrease of absolute ignorance. Natural phenomena that people do not understand and are therefore not subordinate to their power engender various superstitions. At a certain stage of social development, superstitions become intertwined with men's moral and legal concepts, to which they then give a definite tinge.* In the process of struggle, as brought about by the growth of the new actual relations among people in the social process of production—religious views often play an important part. Both the innovators and the conservatives appeal to the gods for aid, placing various institutions under the latter's protection or even explaining them as manifestations of the divine will. It is clear that the Eumenides, whom the Greeks once considered adherents of the Matriarchate, did just as little for the latter's defence as was done by Minerva for the triumph of the paternal authority she was claimed to hold

* Here is what M. M. Kovalevsky says in his book «Закон и обычай на Кавказе» [Law and Custom in the Caucasus]: "An examination of the religious beliefs and superstitions of the Pshavs leads us to the conclusion that, though under the official control of the Orthodox church, the Pshavs still stand at a level of development which Tylor has so felicitously termed animism. As is common knowledge this stage usually goes hand in hand with a decisive subordination to religion as both social morality and law" (Vol. II, p. 82). The trouble is that, according to Tylor, primitive animism exerts no influence at all either on morals or on law. At this stage of development "the relation of morality to religion is one that only belongs in its rudiments, or not at all, to rudimentary civilisation". "Savage animism is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the very mainspring of practical religion.... Moral laws have their own foundations," etc. [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of Edward B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, London, 1871] (*La civilisation primitive*, Paris, 1876, t. II, pp. 464-65). That is why it would be more correct to say that religious superstitions become intertwined with moral and legal concepts only at a certain and comparatively high stage of social development. It is to be regretted that lack of space does not allow us to show here how that is explained by present-day materialism.

so dear. When they appealed to the gods or to fetishes for help, people were simply wasting their time and efforts, but the ignorance that led them to believe in the Eumenides in no way prevented the Greek conservatives of the time from understanding that the old legal order (or, more precisely, the old common law) was a better guarantee of their interests. In exactly the same way, the superstition that allowed hopes to be placed in Minerva, in no way prevented the innovators from being aware of the inconvenience of the old way of life.

The Dayaks of the island of Borneo had no knowledge of the use of the wedge in splitting wood. When the Europeans brought the wedge with them, the native authorities solemnly banned its use.* This was quite obviously proof of their *ignorance*: what can be more meaningless than rejection of a tool that makes work easier? However, a moment's reflection may perhaps lead to the discovery of extenuating circumstances. The ban on the use of European tools was probably a manifestation of the *struggle against the European influence* that was beginning to undermine the old way of native life. The native authorities were vaguely aware that the introduction of European customs would obliterate the old order. For some reason, the wedge was far more reminiscent than the other European tools of the destructive nature of the European influence, which was why its use was stigmatised. Why was it that the wedge seemed to symbolise the dangerous innovations more than any other tool? We cannot provide a satisfactory answer to this question, because we do not know the reason for the wedge to be associated in the native mind with the idea of the danger threatening the old way of life. However, we can say with confidence that the natives were in no way mistaken in their apprehensions for the durability of the old order: indeed, European influence very soon and very thoroughly distorts and even destroys the customs of savages and barbarians it has affected.

According to Tylor, the Dayaks, while vehemently denouncing the use of the wedge, did use it whenever they could do so and on the sly. Here we have "hypocrisy" on top of ignorance. But where did it spring from? It must have been engendered by a realisation of the advantages provided by the new way of splitting wood, which was accompanied by apprehension of public opinion or of persecution by the authorities. Thus the thinking animal's instinctive sagacity criticised the very measure that owed its origin to it. And it was right in its criticism: a ban on the use of European tools did not spell the elimination of the dangerous European influence.

* *ibid.*, t. I, p. 82.

Using Labriola's expression, we might say that in this instance the Dayaks took a measure that was inappropriate to their condition, disproportionate to it. In saying so, we would be quite right, and we could add to this remark of Labriola's that men very often think up measures that are out of all proportion and inappropriate to their condition. But what follows therefrom? Only that we should try to ascertain whether there is any dependence between such human errors on the one hand, and the nature or degree of the development of their social relations on the other. That dependence indubitably exists. In its turn, Labriola says that ignorance is explicable, to which we shall add: it is not only explicable *but it should be explained, if only social science is to become a rigorous science*. If "ignorance" is attributed to social causes, then there is no reason to refer to it or any grounds to say that it explains why history has followed a definite course, and no other. The reason lies, not in ignorance but in the social causes that have engendered it and given it a definite nature. Then why should we limit our study to mere references to ignorance, which can explain nothing? *When it is a matter of a scientific understanding of history, references to ignorance testify only to ignorance in the researcher.*

X

Any norm of positive law defends a definite interest. But what do interests derive from? Are they a product of human will and human consciousness? No, they are created by the economic relations between people, but, once they have arisen, they are reflected in human *consciousness* in one way or another. For a definite interest to be defended, an awareness of it has to exist. That is why any system of positive law can and should be regarded as a product of consciousness.* It is not human consciousness that brings into existence the interests that law defends; consequently it does not determine the content of law. However, it is the state of social consciousness (the social psychology) in a given period

* "Unlike what is known as the physical or natural forces, right is not something that exists outside of man's acts.... On the contrary, it is an order that men establish for themselves. Whether man is subordinate, in his activities, to the law of causality, or whether he acts freely and arbitrarily is a matter of indifference in this matter. Anyway, right, according to the law of causality and the law of freedom, is not created outside the province of man's activities but, on the contrary, through them, through the agency of man" (Н. М. Коркунов, «Лекции по общей теории права», С. Перебуйр 1894, стр. 279). [N. M. Korkunov, *Lectures on the General Theory of Law*, St. Petersburg, 1894, p. 279]. This is perfectly correct though very poorly expressed, but Mr. Korkunov has forgotten to add that the interests defended by law are not "created by men for themselves" but are determined by their mutual relations in the social process of production.

that determines *the form assumed in men's minds by the reflection of a particular interest*. Without taking into account the state of the social consciousness, we would be wholly unable to gain an understanding of the history of law.

Form should always and carefully be distinguished from *content* in that history. From the *formal* viewpoint, law, like any other ideology, experiences the influence of all or at least certain other ideologies: religious beliefs, philosophical concepts and so on. This circumstance alone hampers, in certain and sometimes considerable measure, the establishment of the dependence between people's legal concepts and their mutual relations in the social process of production. But that is only half of the trouble.* The actual problem is that, *at various stages of social development, any given ideology experiences in a highly unequal degree the influence of other ideologies*. Thus, in ancient Egypt and partly in Rome, law was subordinate to religion; in recent history, law has developed (in the *formal* aspect—we would underscore that and ask for due note to be taken) under the strong influence of philosophy. The latter had to wage an intense struggle to eliminate the influence of religion on law and replace it with its own influence. That struggle was merely an ideal reflection of the social struggle waged by the third estate against the clergy, yet it immensely hampered the establishment of genuine views regarding the origin of legal institutions since, thanks to it, such institutions seemed a patent and indubitable product of the struggle between abstract concepts. Of course, generally speaking, Labriola is well aware of the kind of actual relations concealed by that struggle of concepts. However, when it comes to particulars, he lays down the weapon of materialism in the face of the difficulty posed by the problem, and, as we have seen, considers it possible to limit himself to a reference to ignorance or the force of tradition. Besides, he also indicates “*symbolism*” as the ultimate cause of many customs.

Symbolism is indeed quite an important “factor” in the history of some ideologies, but it does not belong to the ultimate causes of customs. Here is an example. Women of the Caucasian tribe

* Although this is highly disadvantageous even, for instance, to such writings as Mr. M. Kovalevsky's *Law and Custom in the Caucasus*. This author often considers law as a product of religious views. He should have followed another and correct road of research and regarded both the religious views and the legal institutions of the peoples of the Caucasus as the product of their social relations in the process of production and, after ascertaining the influence of a particular ideology on another, he should have tried to find the sole cause of that influence. Mr. Kovalevsky should evidently have been the more inclined to this mode of investigation for he himself categorically recognised in his other writings the causal dependence of legal norms on modes of production.

of Pshavs cut off their plaits when a brother dies, but not when a husband dies. This is a symbolical act, which has replaced the older tradition of voluntary death on the dead man's grave. But why is it that a woman performs this symbolical act on the grave of her brother, and not of her husband? According to Mr. M. Kovalevsky this "must be regarded as a survival of those distant times when a clan, descended from an actual or imaginary female forebear, was headed by the eldest and closest blood relative in the maternal line".* What follows is that symbolical acts can be understood only when we realise the meaning and origin of the *relations* they mark. Where do such relations spring from? The reply to this question should not, of course, be sought in symbolical acts, though these may sometimes provide useful hints. The origin of the symbolical custom of cutting off a plait on a brother's grave finds explanation in the history of the family, which should itself be sought in the history of economic development.

In the instance we have just considered, the rite of cutting off a plait on a brother's grave has outlived the form of kinship to which it owes its origin. This is an example of the influence of tradition that Labriola refers to in his book. However, tradition can only preserve what actually exists; it cannot explain why a particular rite or form in general has been preserved, let alone whence its origin. The force of tradition is one of inertia. When it comes to the history of ideologies, one often has to ask oneself why a particular rite or custom has survived, while not only the relations that have engendered it but even cognate customs and rites born of the same relations have disappeared. This question is similar to the one that asks why the destructive impact of new relations has bypassed a particular rite or custom, while eliminating others. To reply to this question by a reference to the force of tradition means limiting oneself to repeating it in the affirmative form. But where should one seek the reply? It is to be found in *social psychology*.

The old customs disappear and the old rites are neglected when people enter into new relations among themselves. The struggle of social interests finds expression in a clash between the new customs and rites, and the old ones. No symbolical rite or custom, taken *as such and in itself*, can exert any positive or negative influence on the development of new relations. If the conservatives come out firmly for the old customs, it is because the idea of the beneficial, cherished and habitual social order of things is closely associated in their minds with the idea of such customs. If the innovators dislike and ridicule these customs, it is because

* «Закон и обычай на Кавказе», т. II, стр. 75. [Law and Custom in the Caucasus].

their minds associate the idea of these customs with the idea of cramping, injurious, and unpleasant social relations. Consequently *it is all a matter of an association of ideas*. When we see that some rite has survived not only the relations that have produced it but also cognate rites created by the same relations, then we must conclude that the idea of it has not been so closely associated in the innovators' minds with the idea of hated bygone times as the idea of those other customs. Why are they less strongly associated? A reply to such a question can sometimes easily be found, but at times it is impossible because of the absence of the necessary psychological data. But even in cases when we are obliged to recognise that no answer can be found, at least in the present state of our knowledge, we must remember that it is not a matter of the *force of tradition* but of certain associations of ideas created by definite actual relations of men in society.

The appearance, modification and destruction of associations of ideas under the impact of the appearance, modification and destruction of definite combinations of social forces explains in considerable measure the history of ideologies. Labriola failed to attach to this aspect of the matter all the importance it deserves. That is well shown by his view on philosophy.

XI

In Labriola's opinion, philosophy, in its historical development, often merges in part with theology, and is often in part a development of human thought in its relation to objects that enter the province of our experience. Inasmuch as it is distinct from theology, it takes up tasks towards whose accomplishment scientific research as such is directed. In doing so, it either strives to run ahead of science by giving its own surmises, or else simply sums aggregates and subjects to further logical summation solutions *already* found by science. This is true, of course, but yet it is not the entire truth. Let us take the new philosophy. Descartes and Bacon regarded as philosophy's most important task the increase of the knowledge of the natural sciences with the purpose of giving man greater power over Nature. In their times, philosophy therefore studied those very problems that comprise the province of the natural sciences. One might therefore think that the solutions it provided were determined by the state of natural science. However, that was not quite the case. The then condition of the natural sciences cannot explain Descartes' attitude to certain questions of philosophy, for instance, that of the spirit, etc., but the attitude is very well accounted for by the *social* condition of France at the time. Descartes rigorously separated the realm of faith from that of reason. His philosophy,

far from contradicting Catholicism, attempted to confirm some of its dogmas thereby giving expression to the sentiments of the French of his time. After the long and sanguinary violence of the sixteenth century, France revealed a considerable desire for peace and order.¹⁰⁰ In the field of politics, this striving found expression in support for the absolute monarchy; in the area of *thought* it was expressed in a certain religious tolerance and a desire to avoid disputed questions that were a reminder of the recent civil war, i.e., religious questions, whose avoidance called for a separation of the areas of faith and reason. That, as we have already said, was done by Descartes, but it was not enough. In the interests of social peace, philosophy was called upon to solemnly acknowledge the correctness of religious dogma. That it too did through Descartes, which was why his system—at least three-quarters materialistic—met with sympathy from many members of the clergy.

Descartes' philosophy was logically the source of La Mettrie's materialism, but it provided equal grounds for *idealist* conclusions. If the French did not draw them, there was a perfectly definite social reason for that—the third estate's negative attitude towards the clergy in eighteenth-century France. While Descartes' philosophy emerged from a desire for social peace, eighteenth-century materialism foreshadowed new social convulsions.

This will suffice to show that the evolution of philosophical thinking in France is to be explained, not only by the development of natural science but also by the immediate impact of the developing social relations. An attentive look at the history of French philosophy from another angle will reveal this even more clearly.

We already know that Descartes considered the enhancement of man's power over Nature the main task of philosophy. Eighteenth-century French materialism regarded as its most important duty the replacement of certain old ideas by new ones, on whose basis normal social relations could be built. The French materialists had practically nothing to say regarding the increase of the social productive forces. This was a most substantial difference. Whence did it appear?

The development of the productive forces in eighteenth-century France was greatly hampered by the obsolete social relations of production and by the outmoded social institutions. The abolition of such institutions was essential if the productive forces were to develop further. The entire social movement in France directed towards their abolition. In philosophy, the need for their elimination was expressed in a struggle against the outmoded abstract concepts that had developed from the obsolete production relations.

In Descartes' days, those very relations were still far from obsolete; together with the other social institutions that had developed on their basis, they did not hamper the development of the productive forces, but promoted it, which was why nobody then gave any thought to getting them removed. That was why philosophy set itself the immediate task of building up the productive forces—that most important practical task of the bourgeois society that was coming into being.

We say all this in objecting to Labriola. But perhaps our objections are superfluous. Perhaps he has merely expressed himself inaccurately, while being in agreement with us in the essence? In that case, we would be very glad because we find it pleasant to have clever people in agreement with us.

But were he to disagree with us we would regrettably have to repeat that this intelligent man was in error. That would perhaps have provided our subjective old gentlemen¹⁰¹ with a pretext to smirk yet again over the difficulty of distinguishing between the "genuine" and the "non-genuine" adherents of the materialist understanding of history. In that case, we would reply to those subjective old gentlemen that they were "*smirking only at themselves*".¹⁰² Anyone who has a good grasp of the meaning of a philosophical system will have no difficulty in distinguishing between its genuine and its false followers. If the subjectivists went to the trouble of giving thought to the materialist explanation of history, they would themselves know who the genuine "*disciples*" are, and who the impostors that take its great name in vain. Since they have not gone to the trouble to do so, and will not do that, perplexity is the only thing left to them. That is the common fate of all stragglers from the active army of progress. Apropos of progress, we would like to ask the reader whether he remembers the time when the "metaphysicians" were execrated, philosophy was studied "according to Lewis" and partly after Mr. Spasovich's "manual of criminal law", and "progressive" readers were provided with specially invented "formulas" of great simplicity and within the comprehension of even infants?¹⁰³ What a wonderful time that was! However, it has gone, disappeared like smoke. "Metaphysics" is again beginning to win over Russian minds; "Lewis" is going out of use, and the threadbare formulas of progress are being committed to oblivion. Today those formulas are very rarely recalled even by the subjective sociologists themselves, who have already grown "distinguished" and "venerable". It is noteworthy, for instance, that no one even remembered them at a time when they seemed to have been greatly needed, i.e., when arguments arose in our country as to whether we could turn from the road of capitalism to that of utopia. Our utopians have taken shelter behind the

back of a man who, while defending a fantastic "popular production", at the same time claimed to be an adherent of modern dialectical materialism.¹⁰⁴ Thus, a dialectical materialism laced with sophistry has proved the only noteworthy weapon wielded by the utopians. That is why it would be very useful to discuss how "progress" is regarded by the adherents of the materialist understanding of history. True, much has often been said in our press on that score. In the first place, however, the present-day materialist view on progress is still very vague to many people; in the second place, Labriola has illustrated it with some very forceful examples and explained it with certain very correct considerations, though regrettably it has not been set forth systematically and fully. Labriola's considerations have to be supplemented, which we hope to do when we have enough time for that. At present, it is time for us to conclude.

But before laying down our pen we would again ask the reader to remember that what is known as economic materialism, against which objections—incidentally, lacking all convincingness—have been raised by our Populists and subjectivists, has very little in common with the present-day materialist understanding of history. From the viewpoint of the theory of factors, human society is a heavy load which various "forces"—morals, law, the economy, and so on and so forth—are each dragging severally along the road of history. From the viewpoint of the present-day materialist understanding of history, things look quite different: historical "factors" prove to be simple abstractions, and when their fog disperses, it becomes clear that men are creating, not several and separated histories—the history of law, of morals, of philosophy, and so on—but a single history of their own social relations, which are conditioned by the state of the productive forces in each given period. *What we call ideologies is merely the multiform reflections, in men's minds, of this single and indivisible history.*

ON THE "ECONOMIC FACTOR"

Final Version

I

Many people in our country have a dislike of polemics, especially of the "mordant variety". Of course, there is no arguing over tastes, which are changeful. There was a time when polemics were all the rage. One might recall Belinsky, or the author of *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*. The latter, in justifying Nadezhdin's polemic ardour, remarks: "One cannot but be surprised by our literary and all other kinds of ideas! It is constantly being asked why the tiller of the soil works his field with a primitive iron or wooden plough! In what other way can one plough soil that is fertile but hard to turn? How can one fail to understand that no major problem is decided without war, and that wars are conducted with fire and sword, not with diplomatic parlance, which is in place only when the purpose of a struggle waged with the sword has been achieved? It is lawless to attack only the unarmed and the defenceless, the old and the maimed; the poets and the men of letters attacked by Nadezhdin were of different stuff...". This is a view I fully share; I also think that saccharine diplomatic phraseology cannot help solve a single important question and that, despite the Russian proverb, a good quarrel is often far better than a patched-up peace. That is how the good God has arranged things, and the Voltairians have no grounds to come out against it.

That is why I am pleased by the polemic that has arisen between *Novoye Slovo* and *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, to whose aid there has come forth the plump Moscow gossip jokingly called *Russkaya Mysl*.¹⁰⁵ It is quite possible that this polemic may be detrimental to somebody's literary *amour-propre* or shake some literary reputation. There is no harm in that. Only undeserved reputations are shaky, and these should not be spared. Moreover, I think that they ought to be shaken. "Do you know what has caused most harm, and, I think, will long continue to cause harm, to the spread of fundamental ideas on literature, and on improved tastes, in our country? *Idol-worship in literature*! Like children, we still pray and bow to the numerous gods of our well-

populated Olympus, and are little concerned with examining their birth certificates a little more often, to find out whether the objects of our idolatry are indeed of celestial origin." That is what Belinsky wrote in his celebrated *Literary Dreams*. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, and our literary Olympus has been ascended by a multitude of new major or minor godlings. Shall we continue to show our old lack of concern over "birth certificates"? Shall we continue to engage in our blind literary idolatry?

Mr. Mikhailovsky has an excellent understanding of the use of digging about the roots of the truth. He has advised our journal to review its baggage "both in respect of purely theoretical propositions of an abstract nature, and in respect of practical conclusions". We are most grateful to Mr. Mikhailovsky for his brotherly counsel. However, since comparison is the best way to learn about things, we shall, in reviewing our own baggage, at times look into the baggage with which, for already thirty years, the estimable reviewer of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* has been sauntering "in the gardens of Russian letters".¹⁰⁶

Let us begin with the "purely theoretical propositions of an abstract nature".

What is the part played by the economic factor in the history of mankind? I voiced several considerations on the matter in my article on the materialist understanding of history, which has come in for attention from Mr. Mikhailovsky. I do not, however, think that he has understood them correctly; he seems to have thought that I have gone over to the standpoint of the subjectivists and other eclectics. For my part, I think that so vast a misfortune will never befall me.

Before engaging in argument, one should agree on matters of terminology. True, we should have all thought of that earlier, but better late than never.

The opponents of the materialist understanding of history have never given a precise definition of the idea with which they link the words "the economic factor". It remains for me to seek, in their writings, a reply to the question of the nature of that factor.

But the opponents of the materialist understanding of history are as numerous as the stars in the vault of heaven. Not for us are dealings with so formidable a host, for which reason we shall address ourselves to two of its leaders: Mr. Kareyev and Mr. Mikhailovsky.

In his criticism of the materialist understanding of history, Mr. Kareyev has, as is common knowledge, proceeded from the very correct idea that man is made up of soul and body. "Both soul and body," he says, "have their needs, which seek for satis-

faction and place the individual into a varying relationship with the outer world, i.e., with Nature and with other people ... therefore Man's relation to Nature according to the individual's bodily and spiritual needs creates, on the one hand, various kinds of art, which are designed to ensure his material existence, and on the other hand, the entire intellectual and moral culture...." Man's materialist attitude towards Nature is rooted in the needs of the human body, in which one should seek "the causes of hunting, cattle-raising, agriculture, the manufacturing industries, trade, and money operations".

But the esteemed professor cannot forget that, besides the needs of the "body", there also exist those of the human "spirit". That is why he disputes "economic materialism" which—*so he thinks*—completely ignores the spiritual needs and takes no account of activities designed to meet them. This stands to the professor's credit. But what does ignoring the needs of the "spirit" mean? What is meant by a refusal to take account of activities designed to meet them? It means proclaiming that man is always and everywhere guided only by his selfish and, moreover, purely bodily needs, such as food, sleep, sex and the like, and that, even if he sometimes reveals a disinterested thirst for knowledge and a selfless love of his fellow creatures, he is simply lying, donning a mask, with the purpose of deceiving some credulous fool.

I ask: has anything of the kind ever been said by any supporter of the materialist understanding of history? Anyone with the slightest knowledge of the literature on the subject will reply without a moment's hesitation: no, nothing of the kind has ever been said by any of them.

If that is so, I have every right to point out to Mr. Kareyev that the adherents of the materialist view on history have in no way ascribed any exclusive role to the economic factor *as understood by him*, i.e., to activities designed to satisfy only man's bodily needs. Of course, I could add with equal right that if the "economic materialists" do hold the views he ascribes to them, then the adherents of the materialist understanding of history have nothing in common with such strange materialists.

Let us now go over to Mr. Mikhailovsky. In 1894, attempting to disprove "economic materialism", he wrote of one of Bloss's historical essays: "From what Bloss¹⁰⁷ says of the class struggle and economic conditions (relatively very little), it does not yet follow that he bases history on the self-development of forms of production and exchange: it would even be hard to by-pass the economic conditions when dealing with the events of 1848. Delete from Bloss's book his eulogy on Marx as author of a revolution in historical science, and also several conventional sentences with Marxist terminology, and it will never occur to you that you are

dealing with an adherent of economic materialism. Individual good pages of historical content in the writings of Engels, Kautsky and several other writers could very well do without the label of economic materialism, since such pages take into account the totality of social life, even with the predominance of the economic string in that accord."

What follows from these words of Mr. Mikhailovsky's is that, in his opinion...,¹⁰⁸ with the relevant literature, will decisively reply: no, none of them has ever revealed any such intention.

Consequently, I have every right to say to Mr. Mikhailovsky what I have already said to Mr. Kareyev: the adherents of the materialist understanding of history have nothing in common with the economic materialists, if only the latter do indeed hold the views you attribute to them.

Do there exist any materialists with such views? This is a question which we shall not consider for the time being because, without allowing ourselves the least deviation, we must get down to the business of establishing the genuine views held by the supporters of the materialist understanding of history.

With the purpose, I shall borrow a highly illustrative example from the writings of Gleb Uspensky.

In the second part of *Ruin* (or, *As Humble as Humble Can Be*) the narrator of the story describes an encounter with a follower of a new dissident sect, who have organised a religious community where all work for the common weal and there is no distinction between "mine" and "thine", so that all members enjoy very good material conditions. The community was founded after the testament of a certain peasant named Myron, who lived the life of a hermit and, by mortifying the flesh, acquired a martyr's reputation. To strengthen the "faith", the leaders of the new sect dug up his coffin, which they had brought to their tabernacle, claiming that it gave off an odour of sanctity. In actual fact, however, there was no such odour, a circumstance that gave pause to a certain young member of the sect, who had never been given to religious fanaticism and whose tastes "ran more to sheepskin coats, a well-lined stomach and other comforts". Seating himself beside the narrator, this young fellow confidently whispered in his ear:

"Don't you think, your Honour, that all this is bunkum?"

"What do you mean?"

"All this about Myron. We've been keeping him here close on three weeks, and to tell you the truth, there is no odour coming from him!"

"Surprised I looked him in the face, which had grown somehow timid.

"What do you think? We don't dare open the coffin until we get a paper from the Synod. One of our women raised the lid

a wee bit, and had a look on the quiet. "I saw nothing in it but some earth", she said. 'It's all spoofery, take my word for it!' That's the kind of thing people are saying. It may be that our faith is a kind of sell-out!

"The fellow shook his head in deep concern.

"What do you mean by a sell-out?' I asked. 'Don't you have a good life? You yourself have told me that you never had it so good back home!'

"That's all very true'.

"So it's worthwhile to carry on, but only if you all pull together!

"D'you think so?' the fellow interrupted me. 'No, that won't be. We'll all go our own ways, that's what we'll do, your Honour. Oh, no, your Honour! We were following a holy man who would give us peace of heart and soul! We thought he would plead for us up on high, so can it all be humbug? So, you see—well, what I am to make of it? Am I such a sinner? So it must be that the truth is not with us—that's what I say. Good grief, I'd rather lead a dog's life! I'll make off and turn myself over to the authorities! I'll run away! Yes I'll make off and surrender to my masters. "Do what you like to me—have no mercy!" I'll make off, for sure.'"

If there do exist, in some part of the world, economic materialists who ascribe an exclusive role to the economic factor as *understood by Mr. Kareyev*, then we would advise them to give deep thought to the passage quoted above. The young sectarian is patently given to economic materialism *in the Kareyev sense*: he is mostly concerned with satisfying the needs of the "body", yet he has spiritual needs, which ultimately prove stronger. He is prepared to give up his sheepskin coat, his well-lined stomach and other comforts, if only the religious doctrine taught by the sect's founders is false and if, in general, "all this is bunkum". This young sectarian is not a fiction of Gleb Uspensky's. One feels that he has been taken from life. After that, how can one ignore the needs of the "spirit"? How can one say that man is always and everywhere guided only by his physical needs? Oh, no, a reading of this passage is enough to convince one irrevocably that the economic materialists discovered by Mr. Kareyev are grossly in error!

But what about the adherents of the materialist understanding of history? Here matters are quite different. This passage will not put them out of countenance for the very reason that they in no way agree with the economic materialists discovered by Mr. Kareyev, on the significance of the economic factor. The adherents of the materialist understanding of history will say that if the young sectarian depicted by Gleb Uspensky had absolutely no predilection for economic materialism as understood by

Mr. Kareyev, even if he gave no thought to sheepskin coats, a well-lined stomach and other comforts, and even if all his thoughts were focussed on the "martyr Myron" alone, he would yet not cease from being a product of his social environment, which in the final analysis is created by the development of the productive forces, which determine the relations among people in the social process of production. As you see, this bears no resemblance to the views ascribed by Mr. Kareyev to his economic materialists. Neither does this resemble the self-development of the forms of production and exchange that Mr. Mikhailovsky has thought up. Incidentally, we shall have more to say about this self-development later.

II

The *Russkoye Bogatstvo* columnist has remarked that driven by an urge to annoy Messrs. Kareyev, Kudrin, Krivenko and, last, Mr. Mikhailovsky himself, I did not deign in my article on the materialist understanding of history, to at least make mention of the part played by modes of production and forms of exchange, "that sufficiently, it would seem, important item in the materialist understanding of history". I would request the reader to pay particular attention to this remark of Mr. Mikhailovsky's, to which I attach the greatest importance.

In the article referred to, I set forth the view held by Labriola, with whom, in this particular instance, I am in full agreement:

"Thus, in their striving to satisfy their needs, men make their own history. Of course, those needs are originally set by Nature, but are then considerably modified quantitatively and qualitatively by the properties of men's artificial environment. The productive forces at men's disposal determine all their social relations. It is primarily the state of the productive forces that determines the relations entered into by men in the social process of production, i.e., their *economic relations*. The latter naturally create certain interests, which find expression in *law*. '...Any legal norm has always been a defence ... of a definite interest,' says Labriola. The development of the productive forces brings about the division of society into classes, whose interests are not only different but are, in many respects—and in the most substantial of these—diametrically opposed. This opposedness of interests gives rise to hostile clashes between social classes, a struggle between them. That struggle leads to the replacement of the *clan* organisation by that of the *state*, the latter's task being to preserve the predominant interests. Finally, on the basis of the social relations determined by a given state of the productive forces, there emerges conventional *morality*, i.e., that morality which usually guides people in their ordinary and everyday practice."¹⁰⁹

Words fail Mr. Mikhailovsky when he reads of such things as "modes of production and forms of exchange"; that is why he is displeased. He is at a loss to understand what I have done with "that sufficiently, it would seem, important item". But what is meant by that item? What is the meaning of modes of production and forms of exchange? They mean those very relations that men enter into in the social process of production, and which I have been dealing with. Consequently I have "deigned" to make mention of this "sufficiently, it would seem, important item", have I not? I have obviously not only deigned to do so, but even given it all its due by speaking of its decisive significance. Why, then, is Mr. Mikhailovsky at a loss? *It is because I have not used those very words which he has learnt by rote.* If he knew the idea that is linked with these words, he would, of course, have immediately understood that I am speaking of those very modes of production and of the forms of exchange (that follow from them). However, he has memorised *only words*, and is quite ignorant of their meaning. That is why he is at once all at sea as soon as I use different words! Here's a pretty kettle of fish! How can one not exclaim together with Bobchinsky, "An extraordinary event!" Or to add together with Dobchinsky, "Unexpected news!"¹¹⁰ In connection with my little bit of goading, Mr. Mikhailovsky has recalled the story about the dancer who was able to do his thing only if he took the first steps from the window. It seems to me that he far more resembles that dancer than I do. Indeed, memorising certain words *without understanding their meaning*, then expecting one's opponents always to use such meaninglessly memorised words, and then getting muddled when they express the same ideas in some other way—that is what is meant by being able to begin dancing only from the window and being unable to raise a foot if the commencement has to be made from the door, for instance. Too bad for words! What a muffer Mr. Mikhailovsky must be!

"We have frequently been asked, both in writing and by word of mouth, why we have not retorted to the numerous attacks launched by the journal *Novoye Slovo* against our journal or individual members of our staff," says Mr. Mikhailovsky. It would seem that after the happening we have mentioned, nobody will be found who will induce him to enter into a controversy with us. It is now fairly obvious that he can only mit Worten kramen in such a polemic. True, in his book *Über die Nothwendigkeit und Vortrefflichkeit der elenden Scribenten*, the well-known Liscow said that "it is far easier and more natural to write with the fingers than with the head". But then, Liscow was fond of paradoxes; this strange man assured us, for example, that one who does no thinking at all writes far better than all the rest. This is something that will probably not be agreed with by those naive people

(perhaps, the "subjective youths"?)¹¹¹ who appealed to Mr. Mikhailovsky to "get yourself out if you are a god!"

Here is what Marx writes in his celebrated introduction to *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely *relations of production* appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the *economic structure* of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure...."¹¹²

As you see, Mr. Mikhailovsky, Marx, too, did not deign to at least make mention of the role played by the modes of production and the forms of exchange, that, it would seem, sufficiently important item, etc. What does that mean? Was he guided by any secret motives? Did he too intend to go over to the stand later taken by the Russian subjectivists? I would advise you, Mr. Mikhailovsky, to make a study of this question.

For the time being, I would draw the reader's attention to the following circumstance: Marx calls the totality of the production relations the economic structure of society. But such relations are nothing but the mutual relations between people in the social process of production. Consequently, any change in the relations of production is *a change in the relations existing between people*. That is why it is quite absurd to speak of the "*self-development*" of such relations, which are claimed to take effect "*of themselves*", without people participating in them. But it is just that very "*self-development*"* that Mr. Mikhailovsky speaks of. This shows how well he understands the Marx whose historical theory he once attempted to refute.

The self-development of the modes of production and forms of exchange is a meaningless medley of words. Yet, the concept of the "economic factor" completely overlaps, with Mr. Mikhailovsky, the concept of "the self-development of the forms of production and exchange". Consequently the economic factor *as understood by Mr. Mikhailovsky* is sheer twaddle. Of course, I cannot consider twaddle a dominant force in history.

Mr. Mikhailovsky is known to be among those who assert that, while they question Marx's *historical* theory, they fully recognise his *economic* doctrine. However, such a distinction is possible only for those who understand neither the historical theory nor

* He is referring specifically to the self-development of modes of production and forms of exchange. We already know that these modes and forms comprise what is known as the mutual relations between men in the process of production.

the economic doctrine of the German thinker. Why is that? Here is the reason:

What is meant by value? According to Marx, it is a social relation of production. This may seem somewhat vague at first glance, but it is very simple to anyone who has understood the *historical theory* of the author of *Capital*.

We already know that, in the process of production, people enter into various mutual relations which are determined by the state of the productive forces. At a certain stage of the development of those forces, producers enter into such relations towards one another in which the products of their labour appear in the form of *commodities*. Commodity A is exchanged for a certain quantity of commodity B, a certain quantity of commodity C, and so on. It has a certain exchange-value. But commodities are products of *labour*; their mutual relations in the *process of exchange* merely express the mutual relations between *working people* (i.e., commodity producers) in the social *process of production*. Consequently, the value of a given commodity expresses only the relation of its producers' labour towards the general process of production. This means that value is a social relation of production. Yet, value is often regarded as a property of an article itself. That is an illusion, but, at a certain stage of the development of the productive forces, this kind of illusion is quite inevitable.

And what about capital? Capital is an exchange-value endowed with a capacity for growth. It is common knowledge that capital that does not produce profit is considered *dead*. The capacity to bring in profit is therefore a distinctive feature of *live* capital. But while the exchange relations of commodities are an expression of the mutual relations between producers in the social process of production, capital—an exchange-value that engenders new value—cannot represent anything but the social relations of producers. That is why Marx says that capital is also a social relation of production, namely, a relation inherent in bourgeois society, a *bourgeois* relation of production. That relation is marked by the worker selling his labour power to the employer. The purpose for which the capitalist buys that labour power is common knowledge. In the process of production, the labourer creates a value that exceeds the expenditure on the purchase of his labour power; the difference between the new value created by the worker and the value of his wages is called surplus value, which belongs to the employer and is the source of his *income*. Thus, capital's ability to produce income is explained by the relations, inherent in bourgeois society, among *people* in the process of production. However, the properties of these production *relations* seem to be those of *things*, i.e., properties of the means of production owned

by the capitalist. This is also an inevitable illusion at a certain stage in the development of the productive forces.

The secret of illusions of this kind was first revealed by Marx. But to reveal that means showing how the course of ideas is determined by the course of social relations.

Indeed, if, at a certain stage of their development, the economic relations of production are of necessity reflected in human minds as properties of things, and if, as Marx says, economic relations do not fall ready-made from heaven but are created by the development of social productive forces, it follows therefrom that certain views must correspond to a certain state of those forces. Anyone who shares Marx's economic theory cannot reject that conclusion; anyone who has recognised that conclusion has already made considerable headway in the materialist explanation of history.

Mr. Mikhailovsky holds that there is no necessary link between Marx's economic views and his theory of history. The attentive reader will have clearly seen why Mr. Mikhailovsky thinks so: it is for the simple reason that he has wholly failed to understand Marx's economic views. Anyone who does not even suspect that the modes of production and the forms of exchange are nothing but the mutual relations of people in the social process of production have an understanding of anything under the sun, only not of Marx or his economic doctrine.

III

It is not without some malice that Mr. Mikhailovsky remarks that Mr. Kamensky's article does not say a single word on whether Labriola's book contains pages dealing with an appraisal of the historical concept of Marx and Engels. It might have seemed that this should have been mentioned at least in passing, but Mr. Kamensky has preferred to devote some time to "tweaking".

What is the relation of Labriola's historical views to the "historical concept of Marx and Engels"? It is a very simple one: they coincide with it. One who understands that "concept" even in part will never, even for a moment, harbour any doubt of that after reading the above-quoted passage from my exposition of the Roman professor's historical views. If Mr. Mikhailovsky is at a loss on that score, it again goes to show how well he has understood a doctrine he considers it his moral duty to question.

Mr. Mikhailovsky has failed to recognise the "historical concept of Marx and Engels" only because he has not met, in its exposition, certain words he has meaninglessly memorised. This is an unpleasant happening, which may be the reason why he will try to lay all the blame on me. He may very well say to us: why have

you garbed Labriola's idea in clothes unfamiliar to me? Why did you not tell me, in so many words, that this writer is among the *Italian disciples*?¹¹³ To that I shall reply that anyone is entitled to express himself as he wishes, if only his words correctly convey the idea that has to be communicated. Besides, I might have had some special motive. Perhaps, I anticipated Mr. Mikhailovsky's remark, and wished to show the entire reading public that while he has committed some of our terms to memory, he has not the least understanding of their meaning. If I really had such a motive, it has been amply justified, as all will agree.

Let us go further. The totality of the relations of production constitutes society's economic structure. The latter is determined by the state of the productive forces. "This goes to show" as Mr. Bel'tov remarks with full justice on page 173 of his book, "that it is only in popular speech that one can speak of the economy as the *prime cause* of all social phenomena. Far from being a prime cause, it is itself an effect, a 'function', of the productive forces".

That is what I, too, say in my article with reference to Labriola's book: "According to the doctrine of the more recent materialists, any economic system that corresponds to the state of the productive forces in a given period is in keeping with human nature. Conversely, any economic system begins to contradict the demands of human nature as soon as it runs counter to the state of the productive forces. Thus, the 'predominant' factor itself proves *subordinated* to the other 'factor'. Well, after that, how can it be 'predominant'?"¹¹⁴

This is a highly important "item" in the historical "concept" of the present-day materialists, and it deserves to be dwelt on. If economic relations were the ultimate and fundamental cause of social phenomena, it would be impossible to understand why those relations undergo change. True, Mr. Mikhailovsky has invented their "self-development", but this word is meaningless and does not explain anything, since no self-development can take place without sufficient cause. In reality, economic relations are determined by the state of the productive forces, and *undergo change because of* changes in that state. Any given totality of the relations of production holds firm only as long as it is in keeping with the state of the social productive forces; when that correspondence disappears, there also takes place the destruction of the given relations of production, the given economic structure, yielding place to a new sum of relations. Of course, a given economic structure does not cease immediately from corresponding to the state of the social productive forces: that is a process which takes place with greater or lesser rapidity according to circumstances. It is the political "factor" which is the instrument that eliminates an outmoded economic structure. With the passage of time, the

development of the social productive forces renders the existent economic structure, awkward and cumbersome to the majority, i.e., the existent system of mutual relations among people in the social process of production. With the growth of the cumbersomeness of that system, the number of people dissatisfied with it increases, the party of innovators gains in strength; in other words, the mutual relations among people change in the sphere of political life as well. When that change reaches a certain degree the process of the refashioning of the old economic structure begins, a process whose rapidity and intensity is also far from always the same. Incidentally, one can again see from this why nothing takes place "of itself" in social life; everything presupposes the activities of social man.

IV

That is how the matter stands from the viewpoint of present-day dialectical materialism; however, the expression "dialectical materialism" also nonplusses Mr. Mikhailovsky. "Mr. Kamensky," he remarks, "speaks everywhere of 'dialectical materialism' of which Labriola is a consistent representative, even if he is in error in details. It is only from a brief footnote that we learn that 'Labriola gives it ('dialectical materialism') the name of *historical* materialism, borrowed from Engels'. It would seem to follow that the term 'dialectical materialism' is wholly absent in Labriola's book. Of course, a thing is not changed by giving it another name, but we shall now see how Mr. Kamensky himself cites an example of confusion as a result of the use of one adjective or another in respect of the noun 'materialism'. The reader is at a loss to understand why and with what purpose one adjective is replaced by another. The brief footnote states that the name of 'historical materialism' has been *borrowed* from Engels. But does that mean that Labriola has directly 'borrowed' while indicating the source, or that this is a mere coincidence and the 'borrowing' as such is a surmise on the part of Mr. Kamensky?"

The term dialectical materialism is completely absent in Labriola's book, this, however, not preventing the Roman professor from being an adherent of dialectical materialism.

Why do I think so? For a number of reasons. I shall name one of them: after reading Labriola's book, I know his views and, besides, I know what is meant by dialectical materialism. Mr. Mikhailovsky has not read the book mentioned above, but the lines I have quoted above from my article on that book are sufficient to clearly show that Labriola is an Italian "disciple"; who does not know that the teachers of such "disciples" were the most outstanding representatives of dialectical materialism? Incidentally,

this is something that Mr. Mikhailovsky does not seem to know. That is why I shall bring to his notice the following lines from Engels:

"The perception of the fundamental contradiction in German idealism led necessarily back to materialism, but, nota bene, not to the simply metaphysical, exclusively mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century. Old materialism looked upon all previous history as a crude heap of irrationality and violence; modern materialism sees in it the process of evolution of humanity, and aims at discovering the laws thereof. With the French of the eighteenth century, and even with Hegel, the conception obtained of Nature as a whole, moving in narrow circles, and for ever immutable, with its eternal celestial bodies, as Newton, and unalterable organic species, as Linnaeus, taught. Modern materialism embraces the more recent discoveries of natural science, according to which Nature also has its history in time, the celestial bodies, like the organic species that, under favourable conditions, people them, being born and perishing. And even if Nature, as a whole, must still be said to move in recurrent cycles, these cycles assume infinitely larger dimensions. In both aspects, modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences."¹¹⁵

Mr. Mikhailovsky can now see that, in Engels's opinion, present-day materialism is *dialectical* materialism. It would be hard to doubt that Engels was an adherent of that materialism, but I would like to preclude any possibility of such doubt. Here is what he himself said on this subject: "Marx und ich waren wohl ziemlich die einzigen, die aus der deutschen idealistischen Philosophie die bewusste Dialektik in die materialistische Auffassung der Natur und Geschichte hinübergerettet haben."* Mr. Mikhailovsky will ask: what is the meaning of the expression historical materialism, sometimes used by Engels and borrowed from him by Labriola? I shall explain that to him, too.

The materialist world-outlook of Marx and Engels embraced—as we have just seen—both Nature and history. In both cases, it was "*essentially dialectical*". But inasmuch as dialectical materialism deals with history, Engels sometimes called it *historical*. This epithet does not characterise materialism, but merely indicates one of the fields to whose explanation it is applied. What could be simpler than that?

In Gleb Uspensky's story *Ruin*, we meet an elderly civil servant named Pavel Ivanych Pechkin, all of whose concepts and ideas

* "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it to the materialist concept of nature and history."¹¹⁶

have become totally muddled under the unexpected impact of the new phenomena of life. This led to his avoiding any argument or reasoning, and simply uttering a kind of "angry nonsense", whether in place or not. Supposing the discussion turned to railways. Pechkin would mutter grumblingly: "Railways! H'm, what is a railway? Railways! What do they mean? What's it all about? Nobody knows." Of late, Mr. Mikhailovsky has begun to reveal a striking resemblance to this civil servant. He grumbles exactly like Pavel Ivanych: "Dialectical materialism! H'm, what is dialectical materialism? Dialectical materialism, dialectical materialism! What does it mean? What's it all about? Nobody knows!" Pechkin uttered his angry nonsense because, to quote from Gleb Uspensky, his mind had been *utterly ruined by his times*. Can it be that Mr. Mikhailovsky's mind is in the same sad condition?

He finds the words dialectical materialists "*clumsy*". That may be so, but their use can easily be avoided by simply speaking of the present-day materialists. If I have till now rarely made use of this term, it has only been because I have considered it necessary to specify and emphasise the nature of present-day materialism. That purpose has now been achieved, I hope, so that, instead of dialectical materialism and dialectical materialists, I can now speak of present-day materialism and the present-day materialists.

I shall also observe that Mr. Mikhailovsky is a very poor judge of terminology. A short while ago, he condemned the use of the term "*proizvoditel*", complaining that it smacked of the stable! How can one counter that kind of argument? Since the publication of Saint-Simon's journal *Le producteur*¹¹⁷ in 1825, this term has been in constant use in Western Europe, and arouses no associations with the stable.¹¹⁸ And now it brings up the idea of a stable in the mind of our "repentant nobleman". In this case it is not the term that is at fault, but probably, this repentant nobleman's upbringing.

V

In my article, I say that, in Mr. Mikhailovsky's opinion, Louis Blanc and Y. Zhukovsky have been the same kind of "economic materialists" as are our present-day adherents of the materialist understanding of history, and that such an opinion can be grounded only in an *extreme confusion of ideas*. With his usual mildness, Mr. Mikhailovsky voices the following objection: "That is *untrue*" (the italics are his) "I did not express such an opinion". But no, Mr. Mikhailovsky, you did express it. Here is how you put it: "Mr. Beltov speaks of the French historians and the French 'uto-

pians', appraising both of them according to the measure of their understanding or non-understanding of the economy as the foundation of the social edifice. Strangely enough, however, he makes no mention of Louis Blanc in this connection, although the introduction to his *Histoire de dix ans* is alone sufficient to grant him a place of honour among the first teachers of what is known as economic materialism. Of course, it contains very much that Mr. Beltov cannot agree with, but it does deal with the struggle of the classes, an estimation of their economic features, and the economy as the secret spring of politics; in general it deals with very much of what *later* became part of the doctrine so ardently defended by Mr. Beltov. I make mention of this omission in the first place because it is both surprising in itself and hints at certain accessory aims that have nothing in common with impartiality".

Louis Blanc holds a place of honour among the "*first teachers*" of what is known as economic materialism. That is excellent. But what does Mr. Mikhailovsky understand by the words "economic materialism"? He means "the historical concept of Marx and Engels". Hence it follows that Louis Blanc was one of the fathers of that "concept". But that is the very "concept" that our adherents of the materialist understanding of history hold today. Consequently, they are the same kind of economic materialists as Louis Blanc, a man who, it is claimed, holds a place of honour among their first teachers. Which of us, then, has spoken an "*untruth*" (this time the italics are mine)?

With my knowledge of Mr. Mikhailovsky, I know in advance how he will try to extricate himself from his awkward situation. He will say: "After all, I added that Louis Blanc contains very much that Mr. Beltov cannot agree with, which means that, as one of the first teachers of economic materialism, he nevertheless was not the same kind of economic materialist as the economic materialists are." With Mr. Mikhailovsky, things always work out as they do in the French song:

<i>Ils étaient quatre</i>	<i>Le quatrième dit: ça ne me regarde pas,</i>
<i>Qui voulaient se battre,</i>	<i>Mais cela n'empêche pas,</i>
<i>Mais il y en avait trois</i>	<i>Qu'ils restaient quatre</i>
<i>Qui ne le voulaient pas;</i>	<i>Qui voulaient se battre.*</i>

This kind of logic, however, is capable of convincing only one who wishes to be convinced at all and any cost, i.e., one who needs no convincing. The reference to the words "very much" is capable

* There once were four
Who wanted war,
But three were quite
Unwilling to fight;

The fourth declared: I do not care,
But all the same the fact remains
There once were four
Who wanted war.

of proving nothing, in view of the accompanying words of Mr. Mikhailovsky himself: "It does deal with the struggle of classes, an estimation of their economic features, and the economy as the secret spring of politics; in general, it deals with very much of what *later* became part of the doctrine so ardently defended by Mr. Belov." These words cannot be understood otherwise than I have understood them, i.e., in the sense that since Louis Blanc both provides an estimation of classes according to their economic features, and regards the economy as the secret spring, etc., he was the same kind of economic materialist as our present-day adherents of the materialist view of history. But I have also understood that, in speaking in this way, Mr. Mikhailovsky is vastly in error because there is a tremendous and essential difference between Louis Blanc's historical views and the "historical concept" of the present-day materialists. That "concept" is of a vividly and consistently expressed *materialist* nature, while Louis Blanc's "economic materialism" did not prevent him from viewing history through the eyes of an *idealist*. And if, notwithstanding all this, Mr. Mikhailovsky has numbered Louis Blanc among the first teachers of "economic materialism"—by which he understands the present-day materialist explanation of history—he has thereby splendidly proved his complete unfamiliarity with the matter.

"The economy as the secret spring", an "estimation of classes according to their economic features" and other "features", which have given Mr. Mikhailovsky grounds to number Louis Blanc among the "first teachers of economic materialism" are to be met with aggregately and individually in the writings of the French historians of the Restoration: Augustin Thierry, Mignet, and especially Guizot. As Mr. Mikhailovsky seems to be unaware of all this, I am prepared to pass some useful information in this field on to him.

As is common knowledge, Guizot played a most active part in the social movement that was the distinctive feature of French domestic history during the Restoration and consisted in the bourgeoisie's struggle against the spiritual and temporal aristocracy, who were trying to regain the privileged position the Revolution had destroyed. Guizot was well aware of the significance of that movement: he saw it merely as the final and concluding episode in a class struggle which had lasted several centuries. He saw the heated political arguments in the then Chamber as the selfsame century-old dissension between the "middle class" and the nobility. His own sympathies were entirely on the side of the bourgeoisie, which he served with all his might, all his soul, and all his thoughts, encouraging it to carry on the struggle to the bitter end. The events of the end of the last century had

been a war, he said; that war had led to conquest; the middle class had won a position that was worthy of it, and should preserve its gains at all and any cost; no reconciliation was possible between the middle class and the aristocracy until the latter became reconciled to the fact of those gains.* It was for that reason that certain adherents of the ancien régime accused him of speaking of the class struggle with the aim of inflaming passions. To this he replied convincingly and eloquently in a long *Avant-propos* to the third edition of the book I have just mentioned. What he sets out to prove is that the class struggle is not a theory but a fact. "In giving expression to that fact," he continues, "I was very far from claiming the honour of a discovery or merely of something new. I wanted only to summarise the political history of France. The struggle between the social estates fills or rather comprises" (sic!) "all that history. This was known and said many centuries before the Revolution. It was known and said in 1789. It was known and said three months ago (written in 1820). Though I am now accused of having said so, I do not think that anybody has forgotten it. The facts do not vanish at the whim or for the fleeting convenience of parties...."

He further remarks with sarcasm that the fact of the struggle between the French social orders would have greatly surprised the old French historian de Boulainvilliers and all those courageous representatives of the third estate who came out in defence of its rights at sessions of the États généraux. In his opinion, only degenerate descendants of the aristocracy could deny that their class had once been the masters of France and had waged an energetic struggle in defence of their privileged status.

Here Guizot's view of the economy as the secret spring of politics was expressed quite clearly; perhaps, Mr. Mikhailovsky would like to know whether Guizot's writings contain any estimation of classes according to their economic features? In that case, I will refer him to his *Essais sur l'histoire de France* and *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*. Incidentally, there cannot be the slightest doubt on this score, but Guizot's view on the "secret spring" determining the spread of certain ideas in a given society is little known and is worth mentioning. This view is expressed in the following words of the French historian: "...ideas, doctrines and even constitutions submit to the play of circumstances and are welcomed only when they serve as an instrument or a guarantee of interests that are pressing and generally felt!"**

* See especially his *Du Gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du ministère actuel*, Paris, 1820.

** *ibid.*, p. 91.

It follows that Guizot, too, was one of the "first teachers of economic materialism". What will you say to that, Mr. Mikhailovsky? And will you not go to the trouble of explaining to us wherein the "historical concept" of Louis-Philippe's former minister differs from the similar "concept" of the author of *Capital*? You will again say, will you not, that, despite all the "springs" and "features" I have named, Guizot nevertheless contains "very much" of what our present-day adherents of the materialist view of history cannot agree with? You will be quite right. However, I shall reply to you, in the first place, that if all that "very much" did not prevent Louis Blanc from being among the first teachers, it cannot prevent Guizot from being that either. In the second place, I would advise you to give thought to that "very much" which distinguishes historical views of Louis Blanc and Guizot from the "historical concept of Marx and Engels". If you follow my advice, you will see for yourself that, underlying all that "very much", is the conviction that the development of social relations and institutions is ultimately to be explained by the *properties of human nature*. You may have already committed to memory, Mr. Mikhailovsky, that, according to the "historical concept" held by the present-day materialists, the gist of the matter is contained, not in human nature but in the mutual relations people enter into thanks to the state of their productive forces. It would be useful to remember that. This is, it may be said, that very "sufficiently important item, it would seem", that distinguishes the present-day materialists' historical concept from all those of the past. It is this very item that makes it impossible to number Louis Blanc and Guizot among the "first teachers" of the materialism which, as we already know, is substantially dialectical in its nature.

If Mr. Mikhailovsky meets a man who speaks of "the economy as the secret spring of politics" and distinguishes classes according to their economic features (incidentally nobody distinguishes them otherwise) who, like Guizot, thinks that history is made up of the struggle of classes, but who, at the same time, *does not know where that "very economy" springs from* and tries to attribute its origin and development to the properties of human nature, then let our subjectivist call him whatever he likes but, at the same time, let him remember that such a man's fundamental viewpoint is the opposite of that held by present-day materialism.

Let us take Mr. Zhukovsky, at least. Mr. Mikhailovsky does not know what to register him as: "an economic or a dialectical materialist". This ignorance again stems from our subjectivist having no understanding of dialectical materialism. If he possessed that understanding, it would have sufficed for him to ask

himself: Does Mr. Zhukovsky attribute the origin and development of socio-economic relations to the development of the productive forces? If that gentleman's writings show that, then Mr. Mikhailovsky should unhesitatingly call him a dialectic materialist; if they do not, he can be called so only through some misunderstanding. The characteristic I have named cannot at all be found, I think, in Mr. Zhukovsky's writings, and I shall remain convinced of that until my opponent proves the opposite to me. I think he will never be able to do so. Even were he to prove it, that would exert no influence on the course and outcome of our argument.

The naive Gretchen did not know that "somewhat different words" sometimes radically change the entire tenor of things.¹¹⁹ This is something that a certain other person does not seem to know either.

I do not remember Mr. Zhukovsky's "old article", but the excerpts from it given in Mr. Mikhailovsky's article give me reason to believe that he speaks of factors in "*somewhat different words*" as compared with me.

Here is what Mr. Mikhailovsky writes: "In indicating the three elements 'which at any given time determine the civic consciousness of society'—the juridical, the political, and the economic—Mr. Zhukovsky goes on to say: the jurists, politicians and economists forget that 'each of them studies *only one arbitrary and abstract aspect of society*, which can be taken separately only conventionally for the sake of convenience in its study, does not possess any actual independence, is consequently unthinkable as of itself, and has that meaning only in a general link with the others.' And further: 'In discussing society in a purely theoretical way, one can *abstract* one aspect from another, and bring up for scrutiny the conclusions and demands of any particular aspect. But it would be highly erroneous'" and so on.

VI

But let us return to the question of "factors".

We know that, according to the doctrine of the present-day materialists, economic relations within any given society are determined, not by the properties of human nature but by the state of the social productive forces. Socio-economic relations also change together with the growth of those forces. Any change in those relations also affects the nature of social man. *Together with any change in that nature, there also takes place a change in the mutual relation of the various factors of social life.* This is a most important "item"; it may be said that anyone who has understood it has understood the whole matter

Let us assume, as a beginning, that only two factors exist: the material or economic, which satisfies the needs of the "body", and the spiritual, which satisfies the needs of the "spirit".* How is the relation between them affected by the development of the productive forces?

For the sake of simplicity, let us also assume that this development does not bring about the division of society into classes.

Since the productive forces at primitive man's disposal were extremely poor, the greater part of his time was devoted to the simple maintenance of his physical life. Consequently, he was under the domination of the "economic factor". However, with the growth of his productive forces, the satisfaction of his "bodily" needs left him more and more leisure which he could use to the advantage of his "spirit": that leisure was devoted to science, art, and so on. It may thus be said that, with the development of the productive forces, the spiritual factor grew ever stronger, and that, consequently, history itself assumed the task of refuting "economic materialism".

That is how matters would have stood had the development of the productive forces not led to the division of society into classes. But that is an arbitrary assumption. How did matters actually stand? In reality, the development of the productive forces destroyed the primitive equality, creating the rich and the poor. The latter, like the primitive savages, had very little leisure for the satisfaction of the needs of the "spirit". Of necessity, the economic factor takes up poor people's entire field of vision, so that if an old widow has lost her only son, she voices her grief in something like the following way:

*Who'll treat a lonely old woman with kindness?
Utterly ruined am I!
Who'll get the wood in when autumn reminds us
Winter will come by and by?
Who'll go shoot rabbits to make me an overcoat
When this one's worn-out and done?
Dead is my boy, dead and gone, dear Kasyanovna,
Now there's no use for his gun!*¹²⁰

But what about the wealthy, or those who are just well-to-do? With them, the economic factor does not take up the entire field of vision; their parental grief is expressed differently, in something like the following words:

* It would be superfluous to remind the reader that I am employing Mr. Kareyev's terminology here.

*"Oh! que de soirs d'hiver radieux et charmants
 Passés à raisonner langue, histoire et grammaire:
 Mes quatre enfants groupés sur mes genoux, leur mère
 Tout près, quelques amis causant au coin du feu!
 J'appelais cette vie être content de peu!
 Et dire qu'elle est morte! Hélas que Dieu m'assiste!
 Je n'étais jamais gai quand je la sentais triste;
 J'étais morne au milieu du bal le plus joyeux,
 Si j'avais, en partant, vu quelques ombres en ses yeux."*¹²¹

This does not, of course, mean that the wealthy or just well-to-do love their dear ones more than the poor do. No, that is a matter of a different association of impressions. With Nekrasov's old woman, her attachment to her son is associated with her "overcoat", "rabbits" and the like, because his filial love was expressed in his attending to her "bodily" needs. They were both poor; one who is poor must perish if he is unable to work for a living or if he has no relatives prepared to support him with their own labour. If Nekrasov's old woman were rich, her son's love would not have found expression in concern for the day-by-day needs of her "body": such needs would be met with the aid of money, and her son's tender care would be directed to meeting the various needs of her "spirit". Were he to die before she did, she would have had no occasion to recall him in connection with "wood" or an "overcoat". She would have had more frequent occasion to recollect his filial respect, or how he had needed her tenderness in his childhood, while she, "content de peu", i.e., with her ignorance of want, would have had all the leisure to devote herself to expressing her tender mother love. I repeat: this is not a question of the depth or the delicacy of affection but of an association of impressions which hinge on a greater or lesser degree of affluence, i.e., on the *economic cause*. However that may be, there can be no doubt that, when society is divided into classes, the economic factor does not play one and the same role in the lives of people belonging to different classes and that the inequality of that role is determined by the economic structure of society.

* [Oh! What happy, charming winter evenings
 Passed in arguing about history, speech and grammar:
 My four children snuggled on my knees, their mother
 Close by, some friends chatting by the fire!
 I used to call that being content with little!
 And to think she is dead! Alas, God help me!
 I was never gay when I felt her sad:
 Was gloomy in the midst of the gayest ball,
 If, on leaving, I saw the least shadow in her eyes.]

This is an interesting conclusion: the role of the economic factor is determined by the socio-economic structure. Does that mean that the economic structure and the economic factor are not one and the same thing? Indeed, they are not, and it is most surprising that this has not been understood by Mr. Kareyev and his fellow-thinkers.

What we call the economic structure of society is the totality of the mutual relations people enter into in the process of their productive activities. Those productive activities do not imply their "bodily" needs alone, as Mr. Kareyev thinks. But if they did pursue that aim, even then it would be absurd to identify people's productive activities with the mutual relations they enter into when engaged in such activities. Our opponents seem incapable of understanding that *when we speak of the economic structure, we are referring to those very relations.*

The reader is already aware of what society's economic structure is determined by. That structure is not a *causa sui*, but, inasmuch as it exists, it determines the entire superstructure that rises above it. Nevertheless, one should not unduly and importunately use the term "*economy*" when endeavouring to explain social phenomena.

When, in the first of my articles on the future of Russian criticism, I attempted to explain to Mr. Volynsky how the present-day materialists see the development of literature and art, I made mention, among other things, of French painting. Let us return to that example.

I have before me a photograph of David's celebrated picture *Les licteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils*. I ask myself: how did the David school emerge from the social relations of production?

A correct reply to this question makes it important to remember that far from all parts of the "superstructure" derive *directly* from the *economic basis*. Art's link with the latter is only *mediated*. That is why, in any discussion on art, the intermediate items should be taken into account. Let us see how the latter can help solve the question I have just raised.

VII

The development of France's economic relations brought to the fore the third estate which, in actual importance, was "*everything*", but was "*nothing*" in the legal sense. This contradiction naturally aroused its dissatisfaction which, growing ever stronger, created in its finest representatives a striving to do away with the old order at all and any cost. Once that striving had arisen, there also had to appear a consciousness that it was

no easy matter to change an age-old system, and that the removal of the outmoded order would demand self-sacrifice in the innovators. Together with that consciousness, and as its necessary effect, there appeared a sense of fellowship with those who had displayed a selfless love of country in previous times and in other peoples. The most outstanding examples of that love were provided by the history of the ancient world, which was why France's progressives addressed themselves to that history: let us recall M-me Roland's recollection of how, in her young days, she was immersed in reading Plutarch. After such things, there is nothing surprising in David's painting his Brutus, or in the success that his picture met with, or, finally, even in its having been ordered officially. The latter circumstance is very well explained by Ernest Chesneau. "In the last years of the reign of Louis XVI," he says, "the universal interest in the republics of antiquity brought in its train a keen desire in official circles to see reproduced in sculpture, painting and literature the exploits of the heroes of Greek and especially Roman times. Yielding to this trend in French tastes, M. de l'Angivillier, custodian of the royal buildings, entrusted to David the painting of two pictures, which finally established his reputation. These were: *Les serment des Horaces* and *Les licteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils*.* De' L'Angivillier was carried away by the pressure of public opinion, whose direction was determined by the then social relations in France, which, in their turn, were fashioned by the development of her productive forces, the causes of profound changes in all her "economy". All this is quite clear, and Chesneau was quite right in remarking: "David faithfully reflected the national sentiment, which applauded its own depiction. He painted those very heroes that the public accepted as their models; in their admiration of his paintings, they fortified their own enthusiasm for those heroes. Hence the ease with which there took place in art a revolution similar to that which was taking place in morals and in the social system."**

It was these causes that explain David's choice of subject matter for his pictures. However, the revolution he brought about in art was not, of course, restricted to that choice. What had changed was the artists' entire attitude to their art. The school that David rebelled against was marked by an inordinate preciosity, saccharinity, which ultimately reached their extremes with Charles Vanloo and his pupils. David's activities in art were a reaction against that pretentious and saccharine trend, which was why pretentiousness and saccharinity yielded place

* *La peinture française au XIX^e siècle*, 3^e éd., p. 10.

** *ibid.*, p. 18.

to austerity in his works.* But where the finest exemplars of that austerity to be found? Again, in antiquity, and again mainly in Roman antiquity, which was then known far better than the Greek. That was why David imitated the ancients. However, there was very little knowledge of ancient painting; it was sculpture that expressed far more vividly to modern nations the aesthetic concepts of antiquity. It can be easily proved that this was the cause of all the main shortcomings in David's school. We cannot, however, go into details here, but shall only say that it was because of this circumstance that each of David's "historical" pictures presents a greater or smaller number of excellently painted statues.**

This fundamental shortcoming was immediately seen when the bourgeoisie, after winning for itself a new position in France, began to harbour other sentiments. But the shortcoming was not noticed in the eighteenth century, being linked with the merits of David's paintings, which we had mentioned above and which were of the utmost importance at the time.

It may well be said, as has been often stated in the past, that David and his followers were, in general, lacking in the temperament essential in the genuine painter. *That* shortcoming can, of course, be explained neither by the condition of French painting prior to David nor by the influence of antique art. It is, however, also very well explained by France's *social* condition at the time, which was most favourable to the development of the *rational* but did not favour the development of *artistic* talents. With David, the rational held sway over the imagination, which of course was detrimental to him as a painter. Painters of the Romantic school were undoubtedly of a far more artistic temperament than were the painters of David's school; romanticism, however, corresponded to another stage of France's social development.

Thus, the revolution brought about by David in painting was merely the expression, in art, of the third estate's struggle for its emancipation. If I am aware how that movement relates to the development of the economic structure of French society, then I am also able to link together David's artistic activities and that development. But any direct appeal to the "economy"

* "Autant on a été loin dans le contourné, le fadement gracieux, autant on va vouloir réagir dans le simple et dans l'austère" (Arsène Alexandre, *Histoire populaire de la peinture. Ecole française*, p. 254).

** This goes to show that the art of a given epoch, like any other ideology and like all social psychology, while reflecting social relations, is at the same time formally closely linked—positively or negatively—with the art of the preceding epoch or epochs. This should always be remembered in any study of the history of ideologies.

explains nothing in the latter, and could merely be the outcome of an unclear understanding of the "historical concept" held by the present-day (*dialectical*, Mr. Mikhailovsky) materialists.

To wind up the question of "factors", I shall cite another two examples.

The epoch of revolution immediately brought to the fore a multitude of outstanding orators: Mirabeau, Barnave, the Girondists and many of the Montagnards were masters of eloquence. Who did they learn their art from? It was from the great French tragedians, who had brought *l'art de bien dire* to perfection. Thus, tragedy emerges as a "factor" that affected the development of political eloquence, that awesome weapon wielded by the public figures of the time. Here is another example. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, French literature came under the massive influence of the political "factor", while the influence of the "economy" was not very palpable. Here is a splendid pretext for you to express noble indignation against the unreasoning "pupils", who seem to recognise no other "factor" than the "economic". If, however, in giving vent to a vehement outburst against them, you would like to learn the reason for the mutual and—mark this!—constantly changing relation between all these "factors", you will be groping in the dark until you address yourself to the selfsame and disagreeable "pupils" who will tell you the following.

A definite economic structure of society is determined by the state of the productive forces. On that structure arise certain legal and political relations. The sum of all those relations is reflected in people's minds, and determines their behaviour. The "economy" sometimes influences human behaviour through the medium of "politics", sometimes through the medium of philosophy, and sometimes through art or some other ideology; it is only at times—at the later stages of social development—that the economy appears in human consciousness in its own "economic" guise. Most often, it influences people through the joint operation of all these factors; their mutual relationships, like the impact of each of them separately, hinge on the particular social relations that have developed on a particular economic basis, the latter, in its turn, being determined by the nature of that basis.

At various stages of society's economic development, any given ideology experiences the influence of other ideologies in varying degree. At first, law obeys religion, and then—as, for instance, in the eighteenth century—it comes under the influence of philosophy. To eliminate the influence of religion on law, philosophy had to withstand a very fierce struggle. That struggle was one between abstract concepts; while it may seem to us that

any given "factor" acquires or loses its importance thanks to its own strength and the immanent laws of the latter's development, its fate is, in actual fact, entirely determined by the development of social relations.

The degree to which the fate of any individual "factor" depends even on secondary features in such relations can be seen by comparing the French and the English revolutions. In his introduction to his *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*, Guizot very correctly pointed out that both these revolutions were brought about by the same causes and pursued the same ends ("la tendance était la même comme l'origine; les désirs, les efforts, les progrès sont dirigés vers le même but"). But similar trends found expression in England differently than in France. In the former country, they took a *religious* colouring, and in the latter a *philosophical*. This difference in the role of the "factors" derived from several secondary distinctions in the mutual relations between social classes.

We have assumed above that only two factors exist; we must now acknowledge that there are very many of them. In the first place, every distinct scientific "discipline" deals with a separate "factor". Second: several factors can be counted in each of the individual disciplines. Is literature a factor? It is; and what about dramatic poetry? It is a factor too. And tragedy? I see no reason to deny that it is also a factor. And the domestic drama? It is a factor too. In short, the factors are beyond number.

When those opposed to the materialist understanding of history say that mankind's development is proceeding under the influence of numerous and highly variegated factors, they are voicing a most edifying truth; that truth boils down to actual social relations, and the historical development of those relations, *being reflected in the human mind at very many and highly variegated angles, which lie on different planes*. This indisputable truth cannot be the limit of our scientific cognition of social phenomena. Thus, by recognising that the English Revolution took place under the powerful influence of the *religious* "factor", we must establish the *social* causes underlying that influence. In exactly the same way, when we recognise that the French social movement of the last century took place under the banner of *philosophy*, we must establish the social cause of the predominance of philosophy. Since we already know what the social relations of people hinge on, then the large number and the wide variety of factors do not in any way hinder our viewing history from the standpoint of materialistic monism.

After reading my article on the materialist understanding of history, Mr. Mikhailovsky took it into his head that I had begun to see social life through the eyes of eclectics such as he. Our

venerable sociologist has thereby revealed the naïveté of a Gretchen:

*Ungefähr sagt das Pfarrer auch,
Nur mit ein bischen andern Worten.**

In view of such youthful naïveté, I can only reply in Faust's words:

*Mischör mich nicht,
Du holdes Angesicht.***

Should the reader ask me whether there do actually exist "economic materialists" who flaunt the economic factor right and left, I would reply that there do. In the eighties, *that* kind of materialism would have seemed to be represented by the well-known economist Gustave de Molinari, in his "L'évolution politique", which was published in *Journal des économistes*. Molinari saw war as an ordinary business deal which yields profit or loss; a republic, as a joint-stock company; a monarchy, as an enterprise run by a single owner, and so on and so forth. The selfsame Molinari regarded the bourgeois economic order as a natural order of economic relations. This was, of course, totally absurd, but a fairly considerable element of that so-called materialism marked the French historians of the first half of our century. I do not have the space here to dwell on the matter, but I do intend to discuss with the reader Alexis Tocqueville's *Démocratie en Amérique*, which came out recently in a Russian translation by Mr. Lind. I shall then have something to say on the matter.

But what kind of materialists does Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky belong to? That is a question that will never be asked by anyone who has read and understood his book on crises.¹²² Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky uses wrong terms, which is highly pleasing to certain "literary acrobats",¹²³ who have not the faintest idea of the essence of the matter and are therefore incapable of going beyond sheer wrangling.

Mr. Mikhailovsky does not know who is referred to in an expression I have used: "an impostor who takes a great name in vain". I shall express myself more clearly. In my opinion, that man is an impostor in our country who suggests that "society" should "tackle problems" which her economic condition does not permit her even to understand. I would like Mr. Mikhailovsky to tell me whether we have writers who have made such childishly naive proposals to society. Do they really exist? In that case, there is nothing for us to discuss.

* [The parson explains it to us, too, in somewhat different words.]

** [Sweet one! My meaning do not misconceive.]

VIII

I shall now deal with some other "items" in Mr. Mikhailovsky's article.

In his words, I am "resurrecting Hegelianism". That is, of course, "*untrue*" (italics again mine). Hegel was an idealist, and I cannot, in all conscience, be taken for an idealist even by anyone acquainted with philosophy only "according to Lewis". If one will go against one's conscience, then, of course, I too can be declared an idealist. To prove that, reference might even be made to my speaking of Hegel with the greatest deference. But I had respect for Hegel inculcated in me by the author of notes on Mill. Here is what he wrote in his analysis of his own dissertation on the aesthetic relation of art to reality:

"Mr. Chernyshevsky fully acknowledges the justice of the present-day trend in science and seeing, on the one hand, the unsoundness of the previous metaphysical systems and, on the other, their unbreakable link with the predominant theory in aesthetics, draws therefrom the conclusion that the predominant theory of art should yield place to another, more in keeping with the new views held by science on Nature and human life. But, before setting forth his ideas, which consist only in an application of the general views of recent times to questions of aesthetics, we must explain the relations that link the new views with the old ones in science in general. We often see people who are continuing some scholarly work rebel against their forerunners, whose works have served as a point of departure for their own. Thus, Aristotle was hostile to Plato, and Socrates relentlessly humiliated the Sophists, whose successor he was. Many such instances are also to be found in modern times, but there sometimes occur gratifying cases of the founders of some new system clearly understanding the link between their own views and those of their predecessors, and modestly calling themselves their pupils, and of the latter, on discovering shortcomings in the concepts held by their predecessors, honestly revealing how much such concepts had promoted the development of their own ideas. Such, for instance, was Spinoza's attitude to Descartes. It stands to the credit of the founders of present-day science that they have regarded their precursors with esteem, almost with filial love; they have fully recognised the vastness of the latter's genius and the lofty nature of their doctrine, which reveals their own views in embryo. Mr. Chernyshevsky is aware of that, and follows the example of those whose ideas he applied to questions of aesthetics."

Feuerbach was Chernyshevsky's teacher in the field of philosophy; the man from whose philosophy Feuerbach's system had emerged, and who was regarded with such vast esteem by Cherny-

shevsky, after the example of Feuerbach, was that very Hegel, in whose writings Mr. Mikhailovsky sees nothing but "metaphysics". Incidentally, I think I have not expressed myself quite accurately. Can it really be said that Mr. Mikhailovsky *sees something or other in the writings of Hegel, if he has never seen those writings?* Another expression would be in place here, but I hope that my idea will, nevertheless, be clear to the reader.

Chernyshevsky also speaks of Hegel with the same vast respect in his *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*. Mr. Mikhailovsky will derive great benefit from reading at least the following lines:

"We are followers of Hegel just as little as we are of Descartes or Aristotle. Hegel now already belongs to history; the present has another philosophy and clearly sees the shortcomings in the Hegelian system; but it should be agreed that the principles advanced by Hegel were indeed very close to the truth, several aspects of the latter being presented to the view by this thinker with truly amazing force. The discovery of some of these truths stands to the personal credit of Hegel; other truths, though they do not belong exclusively to his system but to all German philosophy since Kant and Fichte, were not formulated prior to Hegel by anybody with such clarity or expressed with such force as in his system."

That is exactly how I, so great a sinner, also look upon Hegel. I am just as reluctant to revive "Hegelianism" or Cartesianism, but I do know that "the principles advanced by Hegel were indeed very close to the truth, several aspects of the latter being presented to the view by this thinker with truly amazing force". That is what I say in my articles, which is so displeasing to Mr. Mikhailovsky. I shall reply to him in the words of Fon-Vizin: "It gives comfort, in human ignorance, to regard as nonsense anything you have no idea of."

I wonder if the reader knows which distinctive features in Hegel's philosophy were most to the liking of the author of notes on Mill: they were his hatred for "*subjective*" thinking, and the *dialectical method*. If the reader is surprised, I will ask him to read on:

"In the first place, we shall indicate the most fruitful onset of any progress, which is so clear-cut and conspicuous a distinction of German philosophy in general, and especially of Hegel's system, from all the hypocritical and pusillanimous views that were predominant at the time (the early nineteenth century) with the French and the British: 'Truth is the supreme aim of thinking; seek truth because in truth is goodness; whatever the truth, it is better than anything that is not true; it is the thinker's prime duty not to retreat in the face of any results; he must be prepared to sacrifice

his most cherished opinions to the truth. Error is the source of all ruin; truth is the supreme boon and the source of all other boons.' To assess the extraordinary importance of this demand, which is common to all German philosophy since Kant, but has been voiced with particular energy by Hegel, one should remember the strange and narrow-minded conditions with which the truth was hemmed in by thinkers belonging to other schools of the time; they set about philosophising with the sole purpose of 'justifying the convictions they held dear', i.e., they sought, not the truth but support for their prejudices; each of them took from the truth only what pleased him,' and rejected any truth he found displeasing, acknowledging without any ado that he found a pleasant error far better than the impartial truth. It was this manner of showing concern, not for the truth but for pleasant prejudices that the German philosophers (especially Hegel) termed 'subjective thinking', philosophising for personal pleasure and not for the living need of the truth. Hegel pitilessly exposed this hollow and harmful pastime."

This is truly an excellent passage! It explains very well why our "progressives" have taken to hating Hegel bitterly since the time they have been engaged in the "hollow and harmful pastime" called "subjective thinking". And now let us see what Chernyshevsky says about dialectics:

"It was as a necessary protective means against attempts to depart from the truth to pander to personal desires and prejudices, that Hegel brought forward his celebrated 'dialectical method of thinking'. Its essence is that the thinker should not rest content with any kind of positive conclusion, but to seek, in the object he is giving thought to, qualities and forces that are the reverse of what is presented by that object at first glance; thus, the thinker was obliged to view the object from all sides, so that the truth will present itself to him only as a consequence of a struggle between all possible opposing opinions. This mode gradually produced, instead of the former one-sided notions of the object, a full and all-round study, a living idea of all the genuine properties of the object. To explain reality became the essential duty of philosophical thinking. Hence the extraordinary attention paid to reality, which had previously not come in for any thought and had been unceremoniously distorted to please one's own one-sided prejudices. Thus, conscientious and indefatigable seeking after the truth took the place of the former arbitrary interpretations. In reality, however, everything depends on circumstances, on the conditions of place and time; Hegel therefore acknowledged that the general phraseology formerly used to pass judgement on good and evil, without examination of the circumstances and causes that had given rise to a given phenomenon—

all these general and abstract dicta were not satisfactory: every object and every phenomenon has its own significance, and should be judged only with due consideration of the situation in which it exists; this rule was expressed by the formula: 'there is no abstract truth; the truth is concrete', i.e., a definitive judgement can be pronounced only on a definite fact, after consideration of all the circumstances it depends on."

From this, it will be seen that the dialectical method is not such a bad thing as Mr. Mikhailovsky seems to think. It will also be seen that, in essence, dialectics will be condemned only by people prone to "subjective thinking". Finally, it will be seen that if I am "resurrecting Hegelianism", and defend dialectics, that is not such an immeasurable evil; Chernyshevsky would never have condemned me for it. Besides, the dialectical method has acquired an entirely new and important significance in the hands of the present-day materialists.

"My dialectic method," says the author of *Capital*, "is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of the 'Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world.... With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.... In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form, it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."¹²⁴

I consider it an honour to "resurrect" this method, which neither our "subjective" inventions nor our utopian "formulas of progress" can stand up against. Mr. Mikhailovsky himself senses that things are in a bad way with subjective inventions and utopian formulas, which is why he is hiding behind the backs of our Enlighteners, and presents us in the light of bitter enemies of the heritage handed down to us by the sixties. But this, too, is "*untrue*" (italics again mine). The heritage handed down to us by the sixties is a mixed one. For instance, we have inherited the ideas of Dobrolyubov and his friends. I challenge Mr. Mikhailovsky to show when and where we have attacked those ideas. He will never be able to show that

for the simple reason that, on the contrary, we have defended them. But from the selfsame sixties we have also inherited Mikhailovsky and some of his fellow-thinkers. *That* is a heritage which we do not want even gratis, as people say; that is a heritage we utterly reject. We do so, first, because we have not the slightest interest in the hollow and harmful pastime called subjective thinking; second, because the hollow and harmful pastime called subjective thinking has appeared as a reaction against the ideas of Dobrolyubov's circle, which are so dear to us. Subjectivism established itself in our country for a while solely because that circle had left the historical scene. Mr. Mikhailovsky can full well speak of himself in the words of Skalozub:

*I'm happy in my friends—what more could be desired;
So many vacancies need filling:
The older men have been retired,
While others have fallen, God willing.*¹²⁵

If this little man, who seemed to have stature for a while because great men had left the scene, had decided to accuse us of a negative attitude towards the ideological heritage of the sixties, he has evidently counted on the reader's short memory. However, in doing so, he has run a definite risk. The reader's memory will fail him only for a while. What will happen if the reader sets about referring to documents? What will happen if he finally finds out Mr. Mikhailovsky's genuine attitude to the heritage left us by the sixties? It will be that Mr. Mikhailovsky and his fellow-thinkers will no longer be taken seriously even by the most naive "subjective youths". Of course our intellectual development stands only to gain therefrom, but the subjectivist gentry will lose quite a lot.

IX

Mr. Mikhailovsky claims that the philosophical views held by contributors to *Novoye Slovo* have not yet been ascertained. He goes on to assert, on that basis, that some of those contributors are "resurrecting Hegelianism" (the reader has already seen what that means), while others are given to so-called critical philosophy. However, two men can hold very clear philosophical views and at the same time differ between themselves....¹²⁶

ON THE QUESTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S ROLE IN HISTORY

I

In the second half of the seventies, the late Kahlitz wrote an essay entitled: "Intellect and Feeling as Factors of Progress", in which, referring to Spencer, he argued that feeling played the principal part in human progress, intellect playing merely a secondary role, quite a subordinate one at that. A certain "esteemed sociologist"¹²⁷ replied to Kahlitz, expressing amused surprise at a theory which relegated intellect to secondary place. The "esteemed sociologist" was right, of course, in his defence of intellect, but he would have been far more in the right if, without going into the essence of the question raised by Kahlitz, he had shown to what degree its very posing was impossible and impermissible. Indeed, the theory of "factors" is superficial in essence, for it arbitrarily picks out various aspects of life and hypostasises them, turning them into forces of a special kind which, from different sides and with unequal success, impel social man along the path of progress. But this theory is still more superficial in the form presented by Kahlitz, who converted into special sociological hypostasies, not the various aspects of *social man's* activities but the various areas of *individual consciousness*. This is, indeed, the uttermost limit of abstraction; one can go no farther, for beyond that lies the comical kingdom of utter and manifest absurdity. It is this that the "esteemed sociologist" should have drawn the attention of Kahlitz and his readers to. On discovering what a maze of abstraction Kahlitz had been led into by his efforts to find the predominant "factor" in history, the "esteemed sociologist" may have also chanced to contribute something to a critique of the factors theory itself. That would have been very useful to all of us at the time, but he failed to live up to his vocation, for he himself subscribed to that theory, differing from Kahlitz only in his predilection for *eclecticism*, as a result of which all "factors" seemed equally important to him. The eclectic nature of his mind subsequently found striking expression in his attacks against dialectical materialism, wherein he saw a doctrine which sacri-

lised to the economic "factor" all the others and reduced to nil the role of the individual in history. It never occurred to the "esteemed sociologist" that dialectical materialism is alien to the "factors" viewpoint, and that only an utter incapacity for logical thinking can lead one to see in the former any justification of what is known as *quietism*. Incidentally, it should be noted that there is nothing original in the error made by our "esteemed sociologist"; many, many other people have done and are doing it, and will probably go on doing it....

The materialists were now being reproached with a partiality for "quietism" even when their dialectical concept of Nature and history had not yet been evolved. Without delving into the "depths of time", we shall recall the controversy between the celebrated English scientist Priestley, and Price. In analysing Priestley's theory, Price argued, *inter alia*, that materialism was incompatible with the idea of freedom, and that it precluded all independent activities by the individual. In his reply, Priestley made reference to everyday experience. "To say nothing of myself," he wrote, "who certainly, however, am not the most torpid and lifeless of all animals; where will he find greater ardour of mind, a stronger and more unremitted exertion, or a more strenuous and steady pursuit of the most important objects, than among those of whom he knows to be necessarians?" Priestley had in mind the religious democratic sect then known as Christian Necessarians*.¹²⁸ We do not know whether this sect was just as active as was thought by Priestley who belonged to it. That is immaterial. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the materialist concept of the human will can very well go hand in glove with the most vigorous practical activities. Gustave Lanson has remarked that "all doctrines which presented the greatest demands to the human will maintained, in principle, that will was impotent; they denied freedom and subordinated the world to fatalism".** Lanson was wrong in thinking that *any* negation of what is known as freedom of will leads to fatalism, but this did not prevent him from noting a highly interesting historical fact: indeed, history shows that even fatalism has not always been an impediment to energetic action in practice; on the contrary, it has, in certain periods, been a *psychologically essential basis for such action*. As proof of this, we shall refer to the Puritans, who excelled in energy all other parties in seventeenth-century England, and then to the followers of Mahom-

* An eighteenth-century Frenchman would have been surprised by this blend of materialism and religious dogmatics. However, nobody in England thought it strange. Priestley himself was a very religious man. So many countries, so many customs, as the proverb says.

** See Russian translation of his *History of the French Literature*, Vol. I, p. 511. [*Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris, 1896, p. 446].

et, who in a short space of time subdued a vast area from India to Spain. Those who think that an awareness that a definite chain of events is inevitable makes us psychologically incapable of aiding or opposing it, are very much in error.*

In this, everything depends upon whether my own activities form an essential link in the chain of necessary events. If they do, then the less I hesitate and the more resolutely I behave. There is nothing surprising in this: when we say that a definite individual considers his activities an essential link in a chain of necessary events, that means, among other things, that to this individual, the absence of freedom of will is tantamount to a total *incapacity for inaction*, and that such absence of freedom of will is reflected in his mind as the *impossibility of acting otherwise than he does*. This is exactly a frame of mind that can be expressed in Luther's celebrated words: "Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders,"** and thanks to which men display the most formidable energy, perform the most amazing exploits. That frame of mind was unknown to Hamlet, which was why he was only capable of complaint and reflection. That was also why Hamlet would never have accepted a philosophy, in the meaning of which freedom is merely necessity that has turned into consciousness. Fichte was right when he said: "*As a man is, so is his philosophy.*"

II

Some people here have taken in earnest Stammler's remark on what he calls the irreconcilable contradiction allegedly inherent in a certain West-European socio-political theory. We are referring to his example about the lunar eclipse. In fact, this example is utterly absurd. Human action is not, neither can it be, among the conditions whose conjunction is necessary for a lunar eclipse; for this reason alone, a party to facilitate a lunar eclipse could come into being only in a lunatic asylum. But even if human activi-

* It is common knowledge that, according to the Calvin's doctrine, all human action is divinely predestined. Praedestinationem vocamus aeternum Dei decretum, quod apud se constitutum habuit, quid de unoquoque homine fieri valet (*Institutio*, lib. III, cap. 5). [We call predestination that which has been eternally decreed by God, established by Him for Himself, and valid in respect of the individual.] According to the same doctrine, God chooses certain of his servants to liberate unjustly oppressed peoples. One of these was Moses, who liberated the people of Israel. Everything goes to show that Cromwell also regarded himself as such a Divine instrument; he always called his actions the fruit of God's will and he was probably quite sincerely convinced that they were so. *To him*, all these actions were coloured in advance by the hue of necessity. This did not prevent him from striving for victory after victory; it even gave overwhelming force to that striving.

** [Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.]

ities were among the number of such conditions, none of those who were eager to witness the phenomenon but were certain that it would surely take place *without any aid from them*, would join the lunar eclipse party. In this case, their "quietism" would merely be abstention from *superfluous, i.e., useless, action* and would have nothing in common with genuine quietism. For the example of the lunar eclipse to cease from being meaningless in the instance we are considering, the party mentioned above would have to change it completely. It would have to be imagined that the moon is endowed with a mind, and that the position in celestial space which causes her eclipse seems to her to be the outcome of the self-determination of her own will, and not only gives her enormous pleasure, but is essential for her moral calmness, as a consequence of which she is always passionately striving to occupy that position.* After all this has been thought up, one would have to ask oneself: what would the moon feel on finally discovering that it is neither her will nor her "ideals" that determine her movement in celestial space, but that, on the contrary, her movement determines her will and her "ideals"? According to Stammler, that discovery would certainly make her incapable of motion, unless she extricated herself from her predicament through some logical contradiction. But such an assumption is wholly groundless. True, the discovery might serve as a *formal* reason for the moon's ill humour, her inner moral maladjustment, the contradiction between her "ideals" and the mechanical reality. But since we assume that, in its entirety, the "moon's state of mind" *in general* is ultimately determined by her movement, then the cause of the maladjustment of her mind should be sought in that movement. Perhaps a careful consideration of the matter might have revealed that, when at her apogee, the moon grieved over her will not being free; while at her perigee, this selfsame circumstance provided a new formal source of moral bliss and moral cheerfulness. Perhaps, the reverse may have happened: it may have proved that she had found a way to reconcile free will with necessity, not at perigee, but at apogee. Be that as it may, such a reconciliation is undoubtedly possible; an awareness of necessity is quite compatible with the most energetic action in practice. At least, this has come about in history so far. Those who have denied the existence of freedom of will have often excelled all their contemporaries in

* "C'est comme si l'aiguille aimantée prenait plaisir de se tourner vers le nord car elle croirait tourner indépendamment de quelque autre cause, ne s'apercevant pas des mouvements insensibles de la matière magnétique" (Leibnitz, *Théodicée*, Lausanne, MDCCLX, p. 598). [It would be as if the magnetic needle, unaware of the imperceptible magnetic influence and imagining that it revolves independently of any cause, found pleasure in pointing northwards of its own volition.]

Зачинаю /
Рассуждаю /
Зачем вы, добрый человек?

五

[illegible]

their own will power and have presented the utmost demands to it. There have been many examples of this. They are common knowledge. They can be forgotten, as Stammler has evidently done, only given a deliberate reluctance to see historical reality as it actually is. This reluctance is deeply rooted, for instance, in our subjectivists,¹²⁹ for example, and in some German philistines. But philistines and subjectivists are not human beings but mere *spectres*, as Belinsky would have said.

Let us, however, examine more closely the case of a man's own actions—past, present or future—seeming to him to be entirely coloured by necessity. We already know that such a man, regarding himself, like Mahomet, as a messenger of God, or, like Napoleon, as one chosen by an inexorable fate, or, like certain nineteenth-century public figures, as expressions of the irresistible force of historical progress, displays an almost elemental strength of will, and sweeps aside, like a house of cards, all obstacles set up by provincial Hamlets and Hamletkins.*¹³⁰ But the case in question now interests us from another angle, namely, the following: when the consciousness of the non-freedom of my will presents itself to me only in the form of the complete subjective and objective impossibility of behaving otherwise than I am doing, and when, at the same time, my given actions are at the same time those that I find the most desirable of all possible actions, then necessity becomes identified in my mind with freedom, and freedom with necessity; then, I am non-free only in the sense that *I cannot upset this identity of freedom and necessity; I cannot contrapose them to each other; I cannot feel the restraint of necessity. But such an absence of freedom is at the same time its fullest manifestation.*

Simmel says that freedom is always freedom from something, and that where freedom is not thought of as the opposite of restraint, it is meaningless. That is so, of course. But this minor and elementary truth cannot serve as a ground for the rebuttal of a thesis that is one of the most masterly discoveries ever made by philosophical thought, namely, that freedom means an awareness of necessity. Simmel's definition is too limited: it refers only to freedom from external restraint. Whilst only that kind of restraint

* We will cite another example to illustrate how [strongly people of this kind feel. In a letter to her teacher Calvin, R  nee de France, Duchess of Ferrare (daughter of Louis XII), wrote as follows: "No, I have not forgotten what you wrote to me: that David bore a deadly hatred for the enemies of God; and I myself will never act differently, for if I knew that the King, my father, the Queen, my mother, the late lord, my husband (feu monsieur mon mari) and all my children had been cast out by God, I would hate them with a deadly hatred and would wish them in Hell," etc. What terribly destructive energy could be displayed by people who felt in this way! And yet, such people denied the existence of such a thing as freedom of will!

is under discussion, it would be utterly ridiculous to identify freedom with necessity: a pickpocket is not free to steal your pocket handkerchief if you are preventing him from doing so and until he has overcome your resistance in one way or another. Besides this elementary and superficial concept of freedom, there is another, far more profound. This concept is non-existent for those who are incapable of philosophical thinking; those who are capable of that thinking can achieve it only when they are able to cast off their dualism and to understand that the gulf supposed by the dualists does not exist between subject and object.

The Russian subjectivist contraposes his utopian ideals to our capitalist reality, and goes no further than that contraposition. The subjectivists are bogged down in the morass of *dualism*. The ideals of the so-called Russian "disciples" resemble capitalist reality far less than the subjectivists' ideals do. Nevertheless, the "disciples" have been able to find a bridge connecting their ideals with reality. The "disciples" have risen to the level of *monism*. In the course of its development, capitalism will, in their opinion, lead to its own negation and to the realisation of their ideals, i.e., those of the Russian—and not only Russian—"disciples". That is an historical *necessity*. He—the "*disciple*"—*serves as an instrument of that necessity, and cannot but do so* both because of his social status, and because of his intellectual and moral make-up as created by that status. This too is an *aspect of necessity*. But since his social status has evolved a particular make-up and no other, he not only serves as an instrument of necessity and cannot but do so, but he *passionately desires to do so, and cannot feel otherwise*. This is an *aspect of freedom*, moreover, of a freedom that has grown out of necessity, i.e., more precisely, it is freedom that has become identified with necessity; it is necessity that has transformed itself into freedom.* *Such* freedom is also freedom from a certain degree of restraint; it is also the opposite of a certain degree of restriction: profound definitions do not refute superficial ones, but, in complementing the latter, preserve them within themselves. But, in this case, what sort of restraint, what sort of restriction, is it a question of? That is clear: it is a question of that moral restraint which curbs the energy of those who have not parted company with dualism; the restraint that causes suffering to those who are unable to bridge the gulf separating ideals and reality. Until the individual has won *such* freedom through a courageous exertion of philosophical thought¹, he does not fully belong

* "Die Notwendigkeit wird nicht dadurch zur Freiheit, dass sie verschwindet, sondern dass nur ihre noch innere Identität manifestiert wird" (Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Nürnberg, 1816, zweites Buch, S. 281). [Necessity does not become freedom because it vanishes; it does so only because its still inherent identity manifests itself.]

to himself, his own moral torment being his shameful payment to the external necessity confronting him. But then, as soon as that same individual casts off the yoke of that painful and shameful restriction, he is born for a new, full and hitherto unfamiliar life; and his *free* activities will be the *conscious* and *free* expression of *necessity*.* He then becomes a great social force, and then nothing can or will prevent him from

*Pouring down on wicked falsehood
All the vials of wrath divine....*

III

Again: the consciousness of the absolute necessity of a given phenomenon can only enhance energy in a man who is in sympathy with that phenomenon and regards himself as one of the forces which have brought it about. If such a man, aware of its necessity, were to sit with folded arms and do nothing, he would reveal an ignorance of arithmetic. Indeed, let us suppose that phenomenon *A* must necessarily take place in the presence of a definite set of circumstances *S*. You have proved to me that part of this set of circumstances already exists, and that the other part will exist in a given time *T*. Convinced of that, I, a man in sympathy with phenomenon *A*, will exclaim: "Good!"—and then go to bed until the joyous day of the event you have forecast. What will the outcome be? It will be the following: in your calculations, the sum of circumstances *S* necessary for phenomenon *A* to come about *also included my activities*, equal, let us say, to *a*. Since I am deep in slumber, the sum of circumstances favouring the appearance of the given phenomenon at time *T* will already be, not *S* but *S-a*, which alters the situation. Perhaps my place will be taken by some other man, who was also close to inaction but was saved by the sight of my apathy, which seemed most atrocious to him. In that case, force *a* will be replaced by force *b*, and if *a* equals *b* ($a=b$), the sum of the circumstances favouring *A* will remain equal to *S*, and phenomenon *A* will after all take place at time *T*.

But if my force cannot be taken as equal to zero; if I am dexterous and capable worker, and nobody has replaced me, we shall not have the full sum of *S*, and phenomenon *A* will take place later than we have assumed, or not as fully as expected, or it may not take place at all. This is as clear as daylight. If I do not understand

* As the same old Hegel splendidly puts it elsewhere: "Die Freiheit ist dies, Nichts zu wollen als sich" (*Werke*, B. 12, S. 98 (Philosophie der Religion)). [Freedom is nothing more than the assertion of self.]

it, if I think that S will remain S even after my defection, it is solely because I do not know how to count. But am I the only one who does not know how to count? You, who forecast that sum S would certainly be available at time T , did not foresee that I would go to bed immediately after my talk with you; you were sure that I would remain a good worker to the end; you took a less reliable force for a more reliable one. Hence, you too were wrong in your calculation. But let us suppose that you had made no mistake and took everything into consideration. In that case, your calculation will assume the following form: you say that, at time T , sum S will be available. This sum of circumstances will include my defection as a *negative quantity*; it will also include, as a *positive quantity*, the encouragement given to strong-minded men by the conviction that their strivings and ideals are the subjective expression of objective necessity. In that case, sum S will indeed be available at the time indicated by you, and phenomenon A will take place. This is clear, I think. But if that is so, why was I perplexed by the idea of phenomenon A being inevitable? Why did it seem to me that it condemned me to inaction? Why, in discussing it, did I lose sight of the simple rules of arithmetic? Probably because, owing to the circumstances of my upbringing, I already had a very strong urge for inactivity, and my talk with you tipped the scales in favour of that laudable urge. That is all. *It was only in this sense—as a cause revealing my moral flabbiness and unfitness—that a consciousness of necessity figured here.* It cannot possibly be regarded as the cause of my flabbiness. The cause does not lie therein but in the circumstances of my upbringing. Consequently, arithmetic is a highly estimable and useful science, whose rules should not be forgotten even by—I would say, especially by—the philosophers.

But what effect will an awareness of the necessity of a given phenomenon have upon a strong man who *does not sympathise with it, and opposes its advent*? Here the situation is somewhat different. It is highly possible that it will *reduce* the vigour of his resistance. But when do the opponents of a given phenomenon become convinced that it is inevitable? It is when the circumstances favourable to it are very numerous and powerful. Its opponents' awareness of its necessity, and the slackening of their energy are merely a manifestation of the force of the favourable conditions. Such manifestations, in their turn, form part of the favourable conditions.

But the vigour of the resistance offered will not decline in all its opponents. In some of them it will only grow because they realise that it is inevitable; it then turns into the *energy of despair*. History in general and the history of Russia in particular

provides many an instructive instance of such energy. The reader, we hope, will recall them without any prompting on our part.

At this point, we are interrupted by Mr. Kareyev, who, while of course disagreeing with our views on freedom and necessity and, moreover, disapproving of our partiality for the "extremes" to which strong and passionate men go, is nevertheless pleased to meet in the pages of our journal the idea that the individual may be a great social force. The worthy professor joyfully exclaims: "I have always said so!" True enough, Mr. Kareyev and all the subjectivists have always ascribed to the individual a very important role in history. There was a time when this met with considerable sympathy from young progressives, who were full of a worthy desire to work for the common weal and were therefore naturally inclined to appraise individual initiative very highly. In essence, however, the subjectivists were always incapable, not only of solving but even of correctly formulating the question of the individual's role in history. To the influence of the *laws* of socio-historical development they contrasted the "activities of critically thinking individuals", thereby creating a kind of new variety of the theory of factors: critically thinking individuals were *one* of the *factors* of this development, its own laws being the *other factor*. This produced a manifest incongruity, which could be tolerated only while]active "individuals" focussed their attention on practical and burning problems of the day and therefore could spare no time for philosophical problems. The calm which set in during the eighties gave those capable of thinking enforced leisure for philosophical reflection; since then, however, the subjectivist doctrine has been bursting at the seams and even falling apart, just like Akakii Akakievich's celebrated greatcoat¹³¹. No amount of patching has been of any use, and thinking people have begun, one after another, to reject subjectivism as a patently and completely unsound doctrine. But as always happens in such cases, the reaction against this doctrine has led some of its opponents to the other extreme. While some subjectivists, out to endow the "individual" with the greatest possible role in history, have refused to recognise mankind's historical development as a law-governed process, some of their more recent opponents, who have tried to bring out in higher relief the law-governed nature of that development, have evidently been prepared to forget that *history is made by people and that the activities of individuals cannot therefore but be significant in history*. They have declared the individual une quantité négligeable. This extreme is as impermissible in theory as the one arrived at by the more zealous subjectivists. To sacrifice the *thesis* to the *antithesis* is just as groundless as forgetting the *antithesis* for the sake of the *thesis*. The correct

point of view will be found only when we are able to blend in a *synthesis* the elements of truth they contain.*

IV

This problem has been of interest to us for a long time, and we have long wanted to invite our readers to join us in coming to grips with it. We have, however, been held back by some apprehensions: it has seemed to us that our readers may have already solved it for themselves, and that our invitation will be belated. We no longer have such apprehensions; the German historians have rid us of them. We say this quite in earnest. The fact of the matter is that a rather heated controversy has been raging among German historians of late on the subject of history's great men. Some have been inclined to see in such men's political activities the main and almost sole driving force of historical development, while others have asserted that such a view is one-sided, and that historical science should deal, not only with the activities of great men and not with only political history but with the totality of historical life (*das Ganze des geschichtlichen Lebens*). One of the representatives of the latter trend is Karl Lamprecht, author of *History of the German People*, translated into Russian by P. Nikolayev. Lamprecht's opponents have accused him of "collectivism" and materialism; he has even been equated—horrible dictu!—with "Social-Democratic atheists", as he himself put it in winding up the controversy. On examining Lamprecht's views, we saw that the accusations hurled against this poor savant were utterly groundless. At the same time, we realised that the present-day German historians are incapable of solving the question of the individual's role in history. We then decided that we were entitled to assume that it had remained unsolved for a number of Russian readers too, and that something could still be said about it which would not be entirely lacking in theoretical and practical interest.

Lamprecht has brought together a whole collection (*eine artige Sammlung*, as he puts it) of the views held by prominent statesmen on the influence of their own activities on the historical milieu in which they took place. In his polemics, however, he has confined himself for the time being to references to some of *Bismarck's* speeches and opinions. He quotes the following words spoken by the Iron Chancellor in the North German Reichstag on April 16, 1869:

"We cannot ignore the history of the past, nor can we, gentle-

* The selfsame Mr. Kareyev has forestalled us in our striving towards a synthesis. It is, however, regrettable that he has not gone beyond the truism that man consists of soul and body.

men, create the future. I would like to warn you against the mistake that causes people to advance their clocks, thinking that they are thereby hastening the passage of time. My influence on events I have taken advantage of is usually exaggerated; yet it will not occur to anybody to demand of me that I should *make* history. I could not do that even in conjunction with you, gentlemen, although we could stand up together against the whole world. We cannot make history: we must wait while it is being made. We will not make the fruit ripen more rapidly by placing a lamp under it; and if we pluck the fruit before it is ripe, we will only prevent its growth, and spoil it." On the basis of Joly's testimony, Lamprecht also cites opinions frequently expressed by Bismarck during the Franco-Prussian war.¹³² Again, the underlying idea is that "we cannot create great historical events, but must adapt ourselves to the natural course of things and keep assuring ourselves of what is already ripe." Lamprecht sees in this the profound and whole truth. In his opinion, the present-day historian cannot think otherwise, if only he is able to look into the depths of events and does not restrict his field of vision to too brief an interval of time. Could Bismarck have turned Germany back to a natural economy? That would have been impossible for him even when he was at the height of his power. Overall historical circumstances are stronger than the most powerful individuals. To a great man, the overall nature of his times is "*an empirically given necessity*."

That is how Lamprecht reasons, calling his concept *universal*. The weak side of this "universal" concept is clearly discernible. The opinions of Bismarck that he cites are very interesting as a psychological document. One may not sympathise with the late German Chancellor's activities, but one cannot say that they were insignificant, or that Bismarck was marked by "quietism". It was of him that Lassalle said: "The servants of reaction are no orators, but God grant that progress should have servants such as they are." Yet this man, who at times displayed truly formidable energy, considered himself quite powerless in respect of the natural course of things, evidently regarding himself as an ordinary instrument of historical development; this once again shows that one can see phenomena in the light of necessity and at the same time be a highly energetic statesman. But it is only in this respect that Bismarck's opinions present interest; they cannot be considered a reply to the question of the individual's role in history. According to Bismarck, events occur of themselves, and we can only assure ourselves of what is prepared by them. But then every act of "assurance" is an historical event too: what is the difference between such events and those that occur of themselves? In fact, nearly every historical event is simultaneously an act of somebody

"assuring" the already ripe fruit of preceding development, and a link in the chain of events which prepare the fruit of the future. How can acts of "assurance" be contrasted with the natural course of things? What Bismarck evidently wished to say was that individuals or groups of individuals active in history had never been and would never be all-powerful. This, of course, is beyond the least doubt. But we would like to know what their power—which is, of course, far from unlimited—depends on; under which circumstances it grows, and under which it shrinks. These are questions that neither Bismarck nor the learned advocate of the "universal" concept of history who quotes him provides answers to.

True, Lamprecht cites more comprehensible excerpts.* For example, he quotes the following words of *Monod*, one of the most outstanding representatives of contemporary historical science in France: "One is only too accustomed, in history, to interesting oneself only in brilliant, resounding and ephemeral manifestations of human activity, great events and great men, instead of insisting on the great and slow movements of economic and social institutions and conditions, which constitute the truly interesting and permanent part of human evolution—that part which can be analysed with some certitude, and, in certain measures, reduced to laws. Truly important events and individuals are such, above all, as signs and symbols of various moments of this evolution; but most of the facts that are called historical have the same relation to actual history as the waves which rise to the surface of the sea, are momentarily tinged by all the colours of daylight, and break on the sandy shore, leaving no trace behind them, have to the deep and constant motion of the tides." Lamprecht declares that he is prepared to subscribe to each and every word of *Monod*'s. It is common knowledge that German scholars dislike agreeing with their French counterparts, the French scholars paying them in kind. That is why the Belgian historian Pirenne was particularly pleased to emphasise, in *Revue historique*, that *Monod*'s concept of history coincided with Lamprecht's. "This agreement is highly significant," he observed. "It seems to prove that the future belongs to the new historical orientation."

V

We do not share Pirenne's pleasant hopes. The future cannot belong to views that are vague and indeterminate; the concepts of *Monod* and particularly of Lamprecht are just that. Of course,

* Without dealing with other philosophical and historical articles by Lamprecht, we are here referring, and shall continue to refer, to his article "Der Ausgang des Geschichtswissenschaftlichen Kampfes", *Die Zukunft*, 1897, No. 44.

one cannot but welcome a trend that declares that the study of social institutions and economic conditions is the most important task of the science of history. This science will make great advance when such a trend becomes firmly established. In the first place, however, Pirenne is wrong in considering it a new trend. It arose in historical science as far back as the twenties of the nineteenth century: Guizot, Mignet, Augustin Thierry and subsequently Tocqueville and several others were its brilliant and consistent exponents. The views of Monod and Lamprecht are but faint copies of an old but most outstanding original. Secondly, profound as the views of Guizot, Mignet and other French historians may have been for their time, much in them has remained unexplained. They do not provide a full and precise solution of the question of the individual's role in history. Historical science must provide that solution if its representatives are to cast off a one-sided concept of their subject. The future belongs to that school which will produce best solution of this question too, among others.

The views of Guizot, Mignet and the other historians of this trend were a reaction against the eighteenth-century concepts of history, and are their *antithesis*. In the eighteenth century, students of the philosophy of history reduced everything to the *conscious activities of individuals*. True, there were exceptions to the rule even then: the philosophico-historical field of vision of Vico, Montesquieu and Herder, for example, was much broader. But we are not speaking of the exceptions; the concept of history held by the great majority of eighteenth-century thinkers was exactly as we have described. In this connection, it is very interesting, to re-read the historical works of Mably. According to Mably, Minos created the entire social and political life and ethics of the Cretans, while Lycurgus rendered Sparta the same service. If the Spartans "spurned" material wealth, it was due entirely to Lycurgus who "descended, so to speak, into the depths of his fellow-citizens' hearts, where he crushed the germ of love for wealth" (*descendit pour ainsi dire jusque dans le fond du coeur des citoyens*, etc.).* And if the Spartans subsequently strayed from the path indicated by the wise Lycurgus, the blame rested with Lysander, who persuaded them that "different times and different conditions called for a new genius and a new policy".** Researches written from the angle of this view had very little in common with science, and were written as sermons solely for the sake of the moral "precepts" they were supposed to contain. It was against such views that the French historians of the Restoration

* See *Œuvres complètes de l'abbé de Mably*, Londres, 1789, tome quatrième, pp. 3, 14-22, 34 et 192.

** *ibid.*, p. 101.

rebelled. After the stupendous events of the end of the eighteenth century, it was quite impossible to go on thinking that history was made by more or less outstanding and more or less noble and enlightened individuals, who, at their own discretion, imbued the unenlightened but obedient masses with certain sentiments and ideas. Moreover, this philosophy of history offended the plebeian pride of the theorists of the bourgeoisie. They were prompted by the same sentiments that had found expression in the eighteenth century during the rise of the bourgeois drama. Incidentally, in challenging the old historical views, Thierry used the same arguments that had been advanced by Beaumarchais and others against the old aesthetics.* Last, the storms which France had just experienced very clearly revealed that the course of historical events was by no means determined solely by the conscious actions of men; this circumstance alone was enough to give rise to the idea that those events were due to the influence of some obscure necessity, acting, like Nature's elemental forces, blindly but in accordance with certain immutable laws. It is a most remarkable fact, though one which to the best of our knowledge has hitherto passed unnoticed, that the new views on history as a law-governed process were most consistently applied by the French historians of the Restoration period in their writings on the French Revolution. This was the case, for example, in the works of Mignet and Thiers. Chateaubriand called the new school of history *fatalistic*. Formulating the tasks which it had set the researcher, he said: "In this system the historian should recount the greatest atrocities without indignation, and speak of the highest virtues without love; he should, with a frosty eye, see society only as subject to certain irresistible laws, due to which every phenomenon happens as it inevitably should."** This is erroneous, of course. The new school did not at all demand impassivity in the historian. Augustin Thierry went so far as to say quite frankly that, by sharpening the researcher's mind, political passions could serve as a powerful means of discovering the truth.*** Even a cursory acquaintance with the historical works of Guizot, Thiers, or Mignet will suffice to show that they were in strong sympathy with the bourgeoisie both in its struggle against the temporal and spiritual aristocracy, and with its efforts to suppress the demands of the emerging proletariat. What is incontrovertible is the following: the new school

* Compare the first of his *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* with *l'Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux*, in Volume I of Beaumarchais's *Œuvres complètes*.

** *Œuvres complètes* of Chateaubriand, Paris, 1860, t. VII, p. 58. We also recommend the next page to the reader; one might think that it was written by Mr. N. Mikhailovsky.

*** Cf. "Considérations sur l'histoire de France", *Supplement to Récits des temps mérovingiens*, Paris, 1840, p. 72.

of history arose in the twenties of the nineteenth century, i.e., when the bourgeois had *already* overcome the aristocracy, although the latter were still striving to regain some of their old privileges. A proud consciousness of their class's victory was reflected in all the disquisitions of the historians of the new school. And as the bourgeoisie was never marked by chivalrous delicacy, one can sometimes discern in the discourses of its learned representatives a note of harshness towards the vanquished. "Le plus fort absorbe le plus faible," says Guizot in one of his polemical pamphlets, "et cela est de droit". (The strongest swallows the weaker; that is right). No less harsh was his attitude towards the working class. It was this obduracy, which at times assumed the shape of a calm impassivity, that misled Chateaubriand. Moreover, it was not yet quite clear at the time how the *law-governed nature* of the historical advance was to be understood. Finally, the new school may have seemed fatalistic because, in its striving to firmly adopt the standpoint of the law-governed approach, it paid little heed to history's great men.* The people who had been brought up on the historical ideas of the eighteenth century could not easily reconcile themselves with it. Objections to the views of the new historians came pouring in from all sides; then a controversy started which, as we have seen, has not been ended to this day.

In January 1826, Sainte-Beuve wrote the following in a review of volumes 5 and 6 of Thiers' *Histoire de la Révolution française*, which was published in *Le Globe*.¹³³ "At any given moment a man may, by a sudden decision of his will, introduce into the course of events a new, unexpected and changeable force, which may alter that course but which cannot itself be measured, owing to its changeability."

It should not be thought that Sainte-Beuve held that "sudden decisions" of the human will appear without any cause. No, that would have been too naive. He merely asserted that the mental and moral qualities of a man who plays a more or less important role in public life—his talent, knowledge, resoluteness or irresolu-

* In a review of the third edition of Mignet's *Histoire de la Révolution française*, Sainte-Beuve characterised that historian's attitude towards great men as follows: "À la vue des vastes et profondes émotions populaires qu'il avait à décrire, au spectacle de l'impuissance et du néant où tombent les plus sublimes génies, les vertus les plus saintes, alors que les masses se soulèvent, il s'est pris de pitié pour les individus, n'a vu en eux pris isolément que faiblesse et ne leur a reconnu d'action efficace, que dans leur union avec la multitude." [At the sight of the vast and profound popular unrest he had to describe, and of the spectacle of the impotence and insignificance that the most consummate geniuses and the most virtuous saints fell into when the masses rose up, he was overcome with pity for individuals, saw nothing in them, taken separately, but weakness, and thought them capable of effective action only in union with the masses.]

teness, courage or cowardice, and so on, cannot but have a marked influence on the course and outcome of events; yet these qualities are not explained solely by the general laws of a nation's development; they always and to very considerable degree develop under the impact of what may be called the fortuities of private life. We will cite a few instances to explain this idea, which incidentally would seem clear enough as it is.

During the War of the Austrian Succession,¹³⁴ the French army scored several brilliant victories and France seemed to be in a position to compel Austria to cede fairly extensive territory in what is now Belgium; Louis XV, however, did not claim that concession because, as he said, he was fighting as a king, not as a merchant, so the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle gave the French nothing.¹³⁵ Had Louis XV been a different kind of man, or had there been another king in his stead, the territory of France might have been enlarged and, as a result, her economic and political development would have taken a somewhat different course.

As is common knowledge, France waged the Seven Years War¹³⁶ in alliance with Austria; that alliance was said to have been concluded with considerable assistance from Madame de Pompadour, who had been greatly flattered by the proud Maria Theresa having addressed her in a letter as "cousin", or "dear friend" (*bien bonne amie*). Hence one can say that had Louis XV been a man of stricter morals, or had he submitted less to the influence of his mistresses, Madame de Pompadour would not have acquired so much influence on the course of events, which would have taken a different turn.

Further, France was unsuccessful in the Seven Years War: her generals suffered several ignominious defeats. In general, their behaviour was more than strange, Richelieu engaged in plunder, while Soubise and Broglie were constantly hampering each other. For example, when Broglie was attacking the enemy at Villinghausen, Soubise heard the sound of artillery but did not go to his comrade's aid as had been arranged, and as he undoubtedly should have done. As a consequence, Broglie was obliged to retreat.* The grossly incompetent Soubise was under the protection of the aforesaid Madame de Pompadour. It can again be said that had Louis XV been less of a voluptuary or had his mistress refrained from meddling in politics, the events would not have been so unfavourable for France.

French historians say that there was no need at all for France

* Incidentally, others say that it was Broglie, and not Soubise, to blame for failing to wait for his comrade, as he did not want to share the laurels of victory with him. That has no significance to us, since it does not alter the matter in the least.

to wage war on the European continent; she should have concentrated all her efforts at sea so as to defend her colonies against British encroachment. Her acting otherwise was again due to the inevitable Madame de Pompadour, who wanted to please her "dear friend" Maria Theresa. As a result of the Seven Years War, France lost her finest colonies, which, without any doubt, greatly affected the development of her economic relations. In this case, feminine vanity appears in the role of an influential "factor" of economic development.

Are other examples needed? We shall cite another one, perhaps the most amazing. In August 1761, during the aforesaid Seven Years War, the Austrian forces, after joining up with the Russian troops in Silesia, encircled Frederick at Striegau. Frederick's position was desperate, but the Allies were tardy in attacking, and, after twenty days of inaction against the enemy, General Buturlin withdrew his forces from Silesia, leaving only part of them to reinforce the Austrian General Laudon. The latter captured Schweidnitz at which Frederick was encamped, but this victory was of little account. But what if Buturlin had been a more resolute type of man? What if the Allies had attacked Frederick before he had time to entrench himself? They could have routed him, and he would have had to yield to all of the victors' demands. And this took place barely a few months before another fortuitous circumstance—the death of the Empress Elizabeth—immediately changed the situation greatly in Frederick's favour.¹³⁷ It may be asked: what would have happened had Buturlin been more resolute, or had a man like Suvorov been in his place?

In his analysis of the views of the "fatalist" historians, Sainte-Beuve expressed another consideration which is also worthy of notice. In the aforementioned review of Mignet's *Histoire de la Révolution française*, he argued that the course and outcome of the French Revolution were determined, not only by the general causes which had brought it about and not only by the passions that followed in its train but also by numerous minor phenomena, which had escaped the attention of researchers and did not even belong to social phenomena proper. "While these (general) causes and the passions (they called forth) were operating," he wrote, "the physical and psychological forces of Nature were not inactive: stones continued to obey the law of gravity; the blood did not cease from circulating in the veins. Would not the course of events have changed had Mirabeau, say, not died of fever; had Robespierre been killed by the accidental fall of a brick or by a stroke of apoplexy; or if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet? And will you dare to assert that the outcome would have been the same? Given a sufficient number of fortuities similar to those I have supposed, the outcome might have been the very opposite

of what was, in your opinion, inevitable. I have the right to presume such fortuities, because they are precluded neither by the general causes of the Revolution nor by the passions aroused by these general causes." He goes on to refer to the well-known observation that history would have taken an entirely different course had Cleopatra's nose been somewhat shorter; in conclusion, while admitting that very much more could be said in defence of Mignet's view, he again shows wherein this author's error lies: Mignet ascribes to the action of general causes alone results which many other minor, obscure and elusive causes had helped bring about; his rigorous mind seems reluctant to acknowledge the existence of anything in which he does not see orderliness and conformity to governing laws.

VI

Are Sainte-Beuve's objections sound? I think they do contain a certain amount of truth. But what amount? To determine this, we shall first examine the idea that a man can "by sudden decisions of his will" introduce into the course of events a new force that is capable of considerably affecting that course. We have cited several examples which, we think, explain that very well. Let us give these instances some thought.

It is common knowledge that France's military organisation was steadily deteriorating during the reign of Louis XV. During the Seven Years War, as Henri Martin has observed, the French army, which always had numerous prostitutes, tradesmen and servants in its train and which contained three times as many pack horses as saddle horses, resembled rather the hordes of Darius and Xerxes than the armies of Turenne and Gustavus-Adolphus.* In his history of that war, Archenholtz says that French officers appointed for guard duty would leave their posts to go dancing somewhere in the vicinity, and obeyed their superiors' orders only as they saw fit. The deplorable state of military affairs was due to the decline of the aristocracy, who, however, went on holding all the high posts in the army, as well as to the general disorganisation of the "ancien régime", which was rapidly drifting to its doom. These *general* causes alone would have been quite sufficient to give the Seven Years War a turn unfavourable to France. There is no doubt, however, that the incompetence of generals like Soubise multiplied the French army's chances of defeat, which derived from the general causes. Since Soubise was kept on thanks to Madame de Pompadour, that vain Marquis has to be recognised as one of the "factors" greatly *enhancing* the

* *Histoire de France*, 4^e édition, t. XV, pp. 520-21.

unfavourable influence (for France) exerted by the overall causes on the state of affairs during the Seven Years War.

It was not in her own power that the Marquise de Pompadour's strength lay, but in the authority of the king, whom she had bent to her will. Can it be said that Louis XV's nature was precisely what it had of necessity to be in view of the general course of social relations in France? No: given the same course of development, his place might have belonged to a king who looked upon women differently. Sainte-Beuve would have said that the operation of deep-lying and elusive physiological causes would have sufficed for that. And he would have been right. In that case, it follows that, by affecting the course and outcome of the Seven Years War, those deep-seated physiological forces also affected France's subsequent development, which would have been different had the Seven Years War not stripped her of the greater part of her colonies. Does this conclusion contradict the concept that social development follows a law-governed pattern?

Not in the least. Although the impact of personal qualities is indubitable in these cases, it is no less indubitable that it could have taken effect *only in the given social conditions*. After the Battle of Rossbach, the French were indignant with Soubise's patroness, who daily received numerous anonymous letters full of threats and insults. This greatly disturbed Madame de Pompadour: she began to suffer from insomnia.* Yet she continued to favour Soubise. In 1762, she remarked in a letter to him that he was not living up to the hopes that had been placed in him, but went on to add: "However, do not fear anything; I will take care of your interests and try to make your peace with the King."** As you see, she did not yield to public opinion. Why did she not do so? It was probably because French society was then *incapable of compelling* her to do that. But why was the French society of the day unable to do so? It was prevented from doing so by its form of organisation, which in turn depended on the alignment of social forces in France at the time. Hence, it was the alignment of those forces which, in the final analysis, accounted for Louis XV's nature and the caprices of his mistresses exerting so deplorable an influence on France's fate. After all had it been not the king but the king's cook or groom who had a weakness for the fair sex, that would not have been of the slightest historical significance. Clearly, what lies at the root of the matter is not a particular weakness but the social position of the person affected by it. The reader will understand that these arguments are applicable to all the examples cited above, the only changes required being the necessary ones, for instance, putting Russia in the place

* See *Mémoires de Madame du Hausset*, Paris, 1824, p. 181.

** *Lettres de la Marquise de Pompadour*, Londres, 1772, t. I.

of France, Buturlin of Soubise, and so on. That is why we shall not repeat them.

It follows, then, that individuals can influence the fate of society by virtue of definite traits of their nature. Their influence is sometimes very considerable but the possibility of its being exercised and its extent are determined by society's organisation and the alignment of its forces. An individual's character is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be.

We may be told that the extent of personal influence also depends on the individual's talents. We agree, but the individual can only reveal his talents when he holds an appropriate position in society. Why was France's fate in the hands of a man totally lacking the ability and the desire to serve society? Because such was that country's social organisation. It is that organisation which determines, in any given period, the role, and consequently the social significance of talented or incompetent individuals.

But if the role of individuals is determined by society's organisation, in what way can their social influence, which is determined by that role, contradict the concept of the law-governed nature of social development? Far from contradicting that concept, it serves as one of the most vivid illustrations of such influence.

But here we must make the following observation. Determined by society's organisation, the possibility of individuals exercising a social influence opens the door to the influence of what is known as the play of *chance* in the historical destinies of nations. Louis XV's lubricity was a necessary consequence of his physical constitution, but in relation to the general course of France's development his constitution was *fortuitous*. Yet, as we have said, it was not devoid of influence on France's further fate and was among the causes that determined the latter. The death of Mirabeau, of course, was due to fully law-governed pathological processes. The necessity of those processes, however, arose, not from the general course of France's development but from several particular features of the celebrated orator's constitution and from the physical conditions in which he had contracted his disease. In relation to the general course of France's development, those features and conditions were *fortuitous*, yet Mirabeau's death influenced the further course of the Revolution and was one of the causes determining it.

Still more amazing was the effect of fortuitous causes in the above-mentioned example of Frederick II, who succeeded in extricating himself from an extremely difficult situation only because of Buturlin's irresoluteness. Even in relation to the general course of Russia's development, Buturlin's appointment may have been fortuitous in the sense that we have defined that

term, and of course bore no relation whatever to the general course of Prussia's development. Yet it is not improbable that Buturlin's irresoluteness saved Frederick from a desperate situation. Had Suvorov been in Buturlin's place, the history of Prussia might have taken a different course. It follows, then, that the fate of nations sometimes depends on *fortuities* which may be called those of the *second degree*.

"In allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufälligen," said Hegel (In everything finite there is an element of fortuity). We deal only with the "finite" in science; we can therefore say that all processes studied by science contain an element of fortuity. Does not this preclude the scientific cognition of phenomena? No, it does not. *Fortuity is something relative*. It appears only at the point of intersection of *necessary* processes. To the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru the appearance of Europeans in America was *fortuitous* in the sense that it did not follow from those countries' social development. However, the passion for sea voyages which possessed West-Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages was not fortuitous; nor was the circumstance that the European forces easily overcame the natives' resistance. The consequences of the European conquest of Mexico and Peru were not fortuitous either; in the final analysis, those consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the economic condition of the conquered countries on the one hand, and the economic condition of the conquerors on the other. Like their resultant, these forces can fully serve as objects of rigorous scientific investigation.

The fortuities of the Seven Years War had a considerable influence on the subsequent history of Prussia; their influence, however, would have been entirely different had they appeared at another stage of Prussia's development. Here too the consequences of fortuities were determined by the resultant of two forces: Prussia's socio-political conditions on the one hand and the socio-political conditions in the European countries that influenced her, on the other. Hence here, too, fortuity does not in the least hinder the scientific investigation of phenomena.

We now know that individuals often exert considerable influence upon the fate of society; that influence, however, is determined by its inner structure and by its relation to other societies. But that is not all that has to be said about the individual's role in history. We must approach the question from yet another angle.

Sainte-Beuve thought that, given a sufficient number of minor and obscure causes of the kind that he had mentioned, the outcome of the French Revolution could have been the *opposite* of what we know it to have been. That is highly erroneous. No matter how intricately minor psychological and physiological causes may have been intertwined, they would under no circumstances have

eliminated the great social needs that had given rise to the French Revolution: while those needs remained unsatisfied, the revolutionary movement in France would not have ceased. For the outcome of that movement to have been the opposite of what it actually was, the needs that brought it about should have been replaced by others, their opposites; that, of course, was something no combination of minor causes would ever have been able to do.

The causes of the French Revolution lay in the nature of the *social relations*; the minor causes supposed by Sainte-Beuve to have existed could have lain only in the *personal qualities* of individuals. The ultimate cause of social relationships lies in the condition of the productive forces. That condition hinges on the personal qualities of individuals perhaps only in the sense that such individuals possess more or less talent for making technical improvements, discoveries and inventions. Sainte-Beuve was not referring to those qualities. No other qualities, however, enable individuals to directly influence the state of the productive forces, and hence the social relations which they determine, i.e., *economic relations*. Whatever the qualities of a particular individual may be, he cannot eliminate the given economic relations if the latter correspond to a definite state of the productive forces. But the individual's personal qualities make them more or less fit to meet the social needs which spring from definite economic relations, or to prevent their being met. The replacement of obsolete political institutions by new ones more in keeping with her new economic structure was France's urgent social need at the end of the eighteenth century. Those public figures were the most outstanding and useful at the time who were more capable than others of helping meet that pressing need. Let us assume that Mirabeau, Robespierre and Bonaparte were men of that type. What would have happened had not premature death removed Mirabeau from the political stage? The party of constitutional monarchists would have retained their considerable power for a longer period; its resistance to the republicans would have therefore been more energetic. But that is all. No Mirabeau could have averted the republicans' triumph at the time. Mirabeau's power rested entirely on the sympathy and confidence of the people, but the people wanted a republic as the Court irritated them by its obstinate defence of the old order. As soon as the people had realised that Mirabeau was not in sympathy with their republican aspirations, they would have ceased to sympathise with him; the great orator would then have lost almost all influence and in all probability would have fallen a victim to the very movement he would have vainly tried to stem. Approximately the same thing may be said about Robespierre. Let us assume that he was an absolutely indispensable force in his party; at all events, he was not its

only force. If the accidental fall of a brick had killed him, say, in January 1793,¹³⁸ his place would of course have been taken by somebody else, and though that person might have been inferior to him in every respect, the events would nevertheless have taken the *same course* as they did when Robespierre was alive. Thus, for example, even under these circumstances, the Girondists¹³⁹ would probably not have escaped defeat; it is possible, however, that Robespierre's party would have lost power somewhat sooner and we would now be speaking, not of the Thermidor reaction, but of the Floréal, Prairial or Messidor reaction.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps some will say that by his ruthless terror Robespierre did not delay but hastened the downfall of his party. We will not give this supposition any consideration here; we shall accept it as if it were quite tenable. In that case, we must assume that Robespierre's party would have fallen, not in Thermidor but in Fructidor, Vendémiaire or Brumaire. In short, it may have fallen sooner or perhaps later but it would certainly have fallen because the section of the people which supported Robespierre's party was quite unprepared for lengthy rule. At all events, results "opposite" to those which arose from Robespierre's energetic action were out of the question.

Nor could they have arisen even if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet at the Battle of Arcole,¹⁴¹ let us say. What he did in the Italian and other campaigns could have been done by other generals. They would probably not have displayed the same talent as he did and would not have won such brilliant victories; nevertheless, the French Republic would have emerged victorious from the wars it was waging because its soldiers were by far the best in Europe. As for the 18th of Brumaire¹⁴² and its influence on France's internal life, here again the general course and outcome of events would probably have been the same *in essence* as they were under Napoleon. Mortally wounded by the events of the 9th of Thermidor the Republic was dying a slow death. The Directory¹⁴³ was unable to restore order and that was something the bourgeoisie, which had cast off the rule of the upper estates, now desired most of all. To restore order, a "*good sword*" as Sieyès put it, was needed. At first, it was thought that General Joubert would perform the role of that corrective sword, but when he fell at Novi the names of Moreau, MacDonald and Bernadotte* came up. Bonaparte was only mentioned later: had he been killed as Joubert was, he would not come up for mention at all and some other "sword" would have come forward. It goes without saying that the man elevated to the position of dictator by the course of events must have had an indefatigable striving for power himself, energetically elbowing aside

* *La vie en France sous le premier Empire*, par le Vicomte de Broc, Paris, 1895, pp. 35-36 et. seq.

and ruthlessly crushing all who stood in his way. Bonaparte was a man of indomitable energy, remorseless in the pursuit of his goal. But there were quite a few energetic, talented and ambitious egoists at the time, besides him. The place Bonaparte succeeded in gaining would not probably have remained vacant. Let us assume that another general who had won that place would have been more peaceable than Napoleon, that he would not have raised up the whole of Europe against himself, and would therefore have died in the Tuileries and not on the Island of St. Helena. In that case, the Bourbons would not have returned to France at all; for them, that outcome would certainly have been the "*opposite*" of what it actually was. In its relation to the internal life of France as a whole, however, that outcome would have differed but little from the actual result. After restoring order and consolidating the power of the bourgeoisie, the "good sword" would have soon palled on the latter with its barrack-room habits and its despotism. A liberal movement would have arisen similar to that which appeared during the Restoration; a struggle would have gradually flared up, and since "good swords" are not marked by compliance, the virtuous Louis-Philippe might have ascended the throne of his dearly beloved kinsmen, not in 1830 but in 1820 or 1825. All such changes in the course of events might have had some effect on Europe's subsequent political—and thereby its economic—life, yet under no circumstances would the final outcome of the revolutionary movement have been the "*opposite*" of what it was. Because of the specific qualities of their minds and natures, influential personages can affect the *individual features of events and some of their particular consequences* but they cannot alter their overall *trend*, which is determined by other forces.

VII

Besides, the following should also be noted. In discussing the part great men play in history, we nearly always fall victim to a kind of optical illusion, to which it will be useful to draw the reader's attention.

In appearing in the role of the "good sword" to save public order, Napoleon thereby eliminated from that role all the other generals, some of whom might have performed it in the same, or almost the same, way as he did. Once the social need for an energetic military ruler had been met, the social organisation now barred the road to the position of military ruler to all the other soldiers of talent. Its power was now an impediment to the appearance of other talents of that kind. This is the cause of the optical illusion which we have mentioned. We see Napoleon's *personal* power in a highly exaggerated form, for we credit it with all the

social force that had brought him to the forefront and supported him. Napoleon's power seems something quite exceptional to us because other forces similar to it did not go over from the *possible* to the *actual*. And when we are asked what would have happened had there been no Napoleon, our *imagination* is confused and it seems to us that without him the social movement, on which his power and influence rested, could not have taken place at all.

Far more rarely in the history of mankind's intellectual development does a particular individual's success hamper another's. But even in this we are not assured against the optical illusion mentioned above. When society's given condition sets certain problems to those who express its spirit, such problems attract the attention of prominent minds until they solve them. As soon as they have done so, their attention shifts to another object. After solving problem *X*, talent *A* diverts the attention of talent *B* from this already solved problem to another problem—*Y*. When we are asked what would have happened had *A* died before solving problem *X*, we imagine that the thread of society's intellectual development would have snapped. We forget that, in the case of *A*'s death, *B*, *C*, or *D* could have tackled the problem; thus the thread of society's intellectual development would have remained intact despite *A*'s premature death.

Two conditions must be met for a man with a special talent to thereby acquire great influence on the course of events. First, this talent must make him better suited to the social needs of a definite epoch than anyone else: had Napoleon possessed Beethoven's musical gift instead of his own military genius, he would of course never have become emperor. Second, the existing social order must not bar the road to a person possessing a talent necessary and useful at this particular time. That selfsame *Napoleon* would have died an obscure General or Colonel *Bonaparte* had the old order in France existed another seventy-five years.* In 1789, Davout, Desaix, Marmont and MacDonald were *sous-lieutenants*; Bernadotte was a *sergeant-major*; Hoche, Marceau, Lefebvre, Pichegru, Ney, Masséna, Murat and Soult were *non-commissioned officers*; Augereau was a *fencing master*, Lannes a *dyer*, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr an *actor*; Jourdan a *hawker*, Bessières a *barber*, Brune a *compositor*, Joubert and Junot *law students*, and Kleber an *architect*, while Mortier saw no military service until the Revolution.**

* Napoleon would have probably gone to Russia, where he had intended to go several years before the Revolution. Here, no doubt, he would have distinguished himself in action against the Turks or the Caucasian mountaineers, but nobody here would have thought that this impecunious if capable officer could, under favourable circumstances, become the ruler of the world.

** Cf. *Histoire de France*, par Victor Duruy, Paris, 1893, t. II, pp. 524-25.

Had the old order lasted down to our days, it would never have occurred to any of us that, at the end of the last century, certain French actors, composers, barbers, dyers, lawyers, hawkers and fencing masters were *potential** military talents.

Stendhal noted that a man born at the same time as Titian, i.e., in 1477, could have shared forty years with Raphael, who died in 1520, and with Leonardo da Vinci, who died in 1519; that he could have spent long years with Correggio, who died in 1534, and with Michelangelo, who lived until 1563; that he would have been no more than thirty-four years of age when Giorgione died; that he could have been acquainted with Tintoretto, Bassano, Veronese, Julian Romano and Andrea del Sarto; that, in short, he would have been a contemporary of all the great painters, with the exception of those who belonged to the Bologna school, which arose a full century later.** Similarly, it may be said that a man who was born in the same year as Wouwerman could have been personally acquainted with nearly all the great Dutch painters,*** and a man of the same age as Shakespeare would have been the contemporary of a number of remarkable playwrights.****

It has long been noted that great talents appear always and everywhere, whenever and wherever there exist social conditions favourable for their development. That means that any talent that *actually manifests itself*, i.e., any talent that becomes a *social force*, is a *product of social relations*. But if that is so, one can understand why people of talent can, as we have said, alter only the individual features of events, not their overall trend; *they themselves exist only thanks to that trend; but for the latter, they would have never crossed the threshold between the potential and the actual.*

It goes without saying that there are different degrees of talent. "When a new civilisation brings forth a new art," Taine says with much justice, "there are ten men of talent, who express

* In the reign of Louis XV, only one representative of the third estate, Chevert, was able to rise to the rank of lieutenant-general. In the reign of Louis XVI, a military career was even more difficult for members of that estate. See Rambeaud, *Histoire de la civilisation française*, 6^e édition, t. II, p. 226.

** *Histoire de la peinture en Italie*, Paris, 1892, pp. 24-25.

*** Terborch, Brauwer and Rembrandt were born in 1608; Adrian Van Ostade, Both and Ferdinand Bol, in 1610; Van der Helst and Gérard Dow, in 1613; Metsu, in 1615; Wouwerman, in 1620; Weenix, Everdingen and Pijnacker, in 1621; Berghem, in 1624, and Paul Potter, in 1629; Jan Steen, in 1626; Ruysdael, in 1630; Van der Heyden, in 1637; Hobbema, in 1638; Adrian Van de Velde, in 1639.

**** "Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton and Heywood, who appeared at the same time or followed one other, were a new and favoured generation, which flourished largely on soil fertilised by the efforts of the preceding generation" (Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Paris, 1863, t. I, p. 468).

a social idea by half, surrounding one or two men of genius, who express it in full."* Had certain mechanical or physiological causes unconnected with the overall course of Italy's socio-political and spiritual development led to the deaths of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci in infancy, Italian art would have been less perfect, but the overall trend of its development during the Renaissance would have remained the same. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not create that trend; they were merely its finest exponents. True, an entire school usually springs up about a man of genius, and the pupils try to learn his methods down to the minutest detail; that is why the gap that would have been left in Italian Renaissance art by the early deaths of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci would have had a strong influence on many secondary features of its subsequent history. But that history would not have changed in essence, provided there was no important change in the overall course of Italy's spiritual development due to some overall causes.

It is, however, common knowledge that quantitative distinctions ultimately pass into the qualitative. That is true everywhere; consequently it is true in history as well. A particular trend in art may remain quite without any outstanding expression if some unfavourable conjunction of circumstances carries away in succession several people of talent who might have become its exponents. But the premature death of such people can prevent the artistic expression of that trend only if it is not deep enough to produce fresh talents. Since the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance to the class or social stratum whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role of that class or stratum, here too everything ultimately depends on the course of social development and on the alignment of social forces.

VIII

Thus the personal qualities of leaders determine the individual features of historical events, and the element of chance in the sense that we have indicated always has some part to play in the course of those events, whose direction is ultimately determined by what are termed overall causes, i.e., in fact, by the development of the productive forces and the consequent mutual relations between men in the socio-economic process of production. Fortuitous phenomena and personal features in celebrities are far more noticeable than deep-lying general causes. The eighteenth century gave little thought to such general causes, attributing the course of history to the conscious acts and "passions" of historical personages. The philosophers of the same century asserted that history might

* H. Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Paris, 1863, t. II, p. 5.

have taken an entirely different course as a consequence of the most insignificant causes, for instance, had some "atom" started playing pranks in some ruler's head (an idea expressed often in *Système de la Nature*).

The defenders of the new trend in historical science tried to prove that history could not have followed any other course than the one it did, notwithstanding all "atoms". In their striving to place greater emphasis on the operation of general causes, they paid no attention to the personal qualities of historical personages. As they saw the matter, historical events would not have been affected a single iota by the replacement of some persons by others of greater or lesser abilities.* But if we make that assumption, we must of necessity admit that the *personal element is of no significance whatever in history*, and that everything therein is reducible to the operation of general causes, to the general laws of the movement of history. That was an extreme which left no room at all for the particle of truth contained in the contrary opinion. That was exactly why the contrary opinion continued to retain some right to existence. The clash between these two opinions took the form of an antinomy, in which general laws were the first principle, and the activities of individuals the second. From the viewpoint of the second principle in the antinomy history was seen simply as a chain of fortuities; from the point of view of the first principle, it seemed that even the individual features of historical events were determined by the operation of general causes. But if the individual features of events are determined by the influence of general causes and do not depend upon the individual qualities of historical personages, it follows that such features are *determined by general causes* and cannot be altered, no matter how much these personages may change. The theory thus assumes a *fatalistic* nature.

This did not escape the attention of its opponents. Sainte-Beuve compared Mignet's historical views with those of Bossuet. The latter thought that the force whose operation brings about historical events comes from on high and that they are an expression of the divine will. Mignet sought this force in human passions, which are manifested in historical events with the implacability and inexorability of the forces of Nature. Both, however, regarded history as a chain of phenomena which could in no wise have been different; both were fatalists; in this respect, the philosopher was not far removed from the priest (*le philosophe se rapproche du prêtre*).

* I.e., they argued in this way in discussing the law-governed nature of historical events. When, however, some of them simply described such phenomena, they sometimes ascribed even exaggerated significance to the personal element. What interests us here, however, is not their descriptions but their arguments.

This reproach was justified as long as the doctrine of the law-governed nature of social phenomena equated with zero the influence exercised by the personal qualities of outstanding historical figures. The impression made by this reproach was all the stronger for the reason that the historians of the new school, like the historians and philosophers of the eighteenth century, considered *human nature* the supreme instance, which all the *general causes* of historical movement sprang from and were subordinated to. As the French Revolution had shown that historical events are not determined solely by the *conscious* actions of men, Mignet, Guizot, and other historians of the same trend brought into the foreground the effect of *passions*, which often cast of all and any *restraint by the mind*. But if passions are the ultimate and most universal cause of historical events, then why is Sainte-Beuve wrong in asserting that the outcome of the French Revolution might have been the opposite of what we know it to have been, if individuals had been available capable of imbuing the French people with passions the reverse of those they were inspired with? Mignet would have said the reason was that other passions could not have excited the French people at that time because of the very properties of human nature. In a certain sense, this would have been true. But this truth would have had a strongly fatalistic tinge, for it would have been on a par with the thesis that the history of mankind is predetermined in all its details by the *general* properties of human nature. Fatalism would have appeared here as the consequence of the *individual* disappearing in the *general*. Incidentally, it is indeed always a consequence of that disappearance. "If all social phenomena are necessary," it has been said, "then our activities cannot be of any significance." This is a wrong formulation of a correct idea. What should be said is: if everything occurs as an outcome of the *general*, then, the *particular*, including my own efforts, has no significance. *Such* an inference is correct, only incorrectly used. It is meaningless when applied to the present-day materialist view on history, in which there is also room for the *particular*, but it was justified when applied to the views of the French historians of the Restoration period.

Human nature can no longer be regarded at present as the ultimate and most general cause of historical development: if constant, it cannot explain the extremely changeable course of history; if changeable, its changes are obviously themselves determined by the historical development. At present, we must regard the development of the productive forces as the ultimate and most general cause of mankind's historical movement, and it is the development of the productive forces that determine the successive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this *general* cause, there oper-

ate *specific* causes, i.e., the *historical situation* in which the development of a given people's productive forces proceeds, and which is itself ultimately created by the development of the same forces in other peoples, i.e., the selfsame overall cause.

Finally, the influence of *specific* causes is augmented by the operation of *particular* causes, i.e., the personal traits of public figures and other "fortuities", thanks to which events finally assume their *individual features*. *Singular* causes cannot bring about radical changes in the operation of *general* and *specific* causes, which, moreover, determine the direction and the bounds of the influence exerted by particular causes. Yet there is no doubt that history would have had a different complexion had the particular causes which influenced it yielded place to other causes of the same order.

Monod and Lamprecht still adhere to the viewpoint of human nature. Lamprecht has frequently and categorically stated that, in his opinion, social mentality is the basic cause of historical phenomena. This is highly erroneous; owing to this error, the desire—very laudable in itself—to take into account "the totality of social life" can lead only to vapid if stodgy eclecticism, or, among the most consistent, to arguments à la Kablitz concerning the relative significance of mind and sentiment.

But let us return to our subject. A great man is great, not in his personal features lending an individual complexion to historic events but in his possession of traits which make him the most capable of serving his time's great social needs, which have arisen under the influence of general and particular causes. In his well-known book on heroes and hero worship, Carlyle calls great men *Beginners*. This is a very apt description. A great man is precisely a Beginner because he sees *farther* than others do and his desires are *stronger* than in others. He solves scientific problems raised by the previous course of society's intellectual development; he indicates the new social needs created by the previous development of social relations; he assumes the initiative in meeting those needs. He is a hero, not in the sense that he can halt or change the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are the conscious and free expression of that necessary and unconscious course. Therein lie all his significance, all his power. But it is a vast significance, and an awesome power.

What is meant by the natural course of events?

Bismarck remarked that we cannot make history but must wait while it is being made. But who is history made by? It is made by *social man*, who is its *sole "factor"*. Social man creates his own, i.e., social, relations. But if he creates certain relations, and not others, in a definite period, then that does not of course take place without cause; it is determined by the state of the productive

forces. No great man can impose on society relations which *no longer* conform to the state of these forces or do not *yet* conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense he would be trying in vain to shift the hands of his clock: he would not be accelerating the passage of time or turning it back. Here Lamprecht is quite right: even at the height of his power, Bismarck could not have returned Germany to a natural economy.

Social relations have a logic of their own: while people are living in definite mutual relations, they will feel, think and behave in a definite way and no other. Attempts by any public figure to combat this logic would also be in vain; the natural course of things (i.e., the selfsame logic of social relations) would nullify all his efforts. But if I know in what way social relations are changing because of changes in the socio-economic process of production, I also know the direction social mentality is moving towards; consequently, I am able to influence it. Influencing social mentality means influencing historical events. Hence, in a certain sense, I *can yet make history*, and there is no need for me to wait until "*it is made*".

Monod believes that really important historical events and individuals are important only as signs and symbols of the development of institutions and economic conditions. This is a correct though very inaccurately expressed idea; but just because it is a correct idea, there are no grounds to contrapose the activities of great men to the "*slow movement*" of the conditions and institutions mentioned. A more or less slow change in the "economic conditions" periodically confronts society with the necessity of altering its institutions more or less rapidly. That alteration never takes place "*of itself*"; it always needs the intervention of *men*, who are thus faced by great social problems. Those figures are called great who do more than the rest to facilitate the solution of those problems. But *solving a problem* does not mean being merely a "symbol" and a "sign" of the fact that it has been solved.

We think, however, that Monod made his contraposition mainly because he took kindly to the pleasant-sounding word "*slow*", a word many present-day evolutionists are very fond of. *Psychologically*, that propensity can be understood: it arises of *necessity* in the loyal milieu of the moderate and the punctilious.... But *logically*, it cannot stand up to criticism, as Hegel proved.

It is not to the "Beginners" alone and not only to "great" men that a broad field of activity lies open. It awaits all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to love their fellow-men. The concept of *greatness* is a relative one. In the moral sense, any man is great who, to quote from the New Testament, "lays down his life for his friends".

ON THE ALLEGED CRISIS IN MARXISM

Citizens: the socialists of today possess the rare gift of evoking, from time to time, feelings of joy and hope in that very bourgeoisie which usually considers them—with good reason—their mortal enemies. What is the origin of this strange phenomenon? It springs from the imaginary splits in the socialist camp. In just the same way, the German bourgeoisie were gladdened some seven or eight years ago by the dissensions between the so-called *young*¹⁴⁴ and *old* Social-Democrats, seeing in the former an antidote to the latter; they hoped that, with help from on high and the police, the “young” Social-Democrats would neutralise the “old”, thus enabling the bourgeoisie to gain mastery of the field of battle and reduce both the “old” and “young” to silence.

The bourgeoisie are now rejoicing at the polemic created by several articles by Eduard Bernstein in *Neue Zeit*¹⁴⁵, and by Conrad Schmidt in *Vorwärts*.¹⁴⁶ The bourgeoisie's theorists have lauded these two authors as reasonable and courageous men who have realised the falseness of the socialist theory, and have not been afraid to reject it. Thus, Professor Julius Wolf, a fairly well-known socialist-baiter, has tried to reject the theory of Karl Marx, in a series of articles published this year in *Zeitschrift für Socialwissenschaft* under the title of “Illusionisten und Realisten in der Nationalökonomie”, making use therein of arguments borrowed from Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt. Professor Masaryk, too, in a speech at the University of Prague, spoke of the crisis in the Marxist school and contrasted certain ethical views expressed by Conrad Schmidt to what he considers immoral in the writings of Frederick Engels.

These gentlemen see new allies in Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt, and are grateful to them for this unexpected alliance. That is quite natural. However, I do not think that their joy at Bernstein's and Schmidt's articles will, or *can* be, long-lived. On the contrary, I think it will be of the same brief duration as the joy aroused by the discord between the “young” and the “old” Social-Democrats. Just as the expulsion of several young people who were undiscipli-

ned and incapable of obeying discipline was the only significant consequence of that dissension, so the polemic raised by Bernstein's and Conrad Schmidt's articles will at most end in these two gentlemen ultimately joining the ranks of the bourgeois democrats. That will be a loss to the German workers' party, but socialist theory will remain what it is: an impregnable fortress all hostile forces hurl themselves against in vain. Consequently, the joy felt by the bourgeoisie's theorists is too premature.

Indeed, what have Bernstein and Schmidt actually said? Have they advanced any genuinely new arguments against the theory of Karl Marx? That is something we shall now see.

As has been so excellently said by Victor Adler, the celebrated Austrian socialist, Marx's socialism is not only an economic theory, it is a world theory; the revolutionary proletarian movement is only a sector of the revolution in thought that marks our century. It has its own philosophy, as well as its own understanding of history and its own political economy. In what they call their criticism, Bernstein and Schmidt have attacked present-day socialism as a whole. We shall follow them through all the arguments they have brought forward, and shall, of course, *begin from the beginning, i.e., with philosophy.*

You are all, no doubt, aware that the founder of modern socialism was a firm supporter of *materialism*. Materialism was the foundation of all his doctrine. Bernstein and Schmidt call materialism in question, for they see it as an erroneous theory. In an article recently published in *Neue Zeit*¹⁴⁷, Bernstein called upon socialists to return to Kant *bis zu einem gewissen Grad*.^{*} He thinks, incidentally, that the socialists of today have already abandoned *pure or absolute* (the expression is his) materialism. Unfortunately he does not explain to us what is meant by pure or absolute materialism, but he cites the words of a present-day materialist, a certain Strecker who, according to Bernstein, has said fully in the spirit of Kant: *Wir glauben an das Atom*, which means, "we merely believe in the atom". It may hence be assumed that the *pure or absolute* materialists have spoken of the *atom* with less circumspection: they have claimed to have seen, felt or smelt it. This assumption, however, is quite groundless. Several brief quotations will bring that home to you.

The eighteenth-century materialists were of the "*pure*" variety. Let us begin with La Mettrie, that enfant perdu of materialist philosophy, a man whose boldness frightened even the boldest.

"The nature of movement," he says (*L'homme-machine*), "is just as unknown to us as is the nature of matter."

"The essence of Soul in man and animals," he says in his *Traité*

^{*} [Up to a certain point.]

de l'âme, "is and will always be just as unknown as the essence of matter and bodies," and further: "Though we have no idea of the essence of matter, we cannot deny recognition to the properties that our senses discover in it."

Thus, La Mettrie frankly acknowledges that he does not know the essence of matter and that he knows only some of its properties discovered by the senses. This is equivalent to La Mettrie merely believing in the atom. Yet he was "pure" and "absolute".

We shall now go over to another representative of eighteenth-century pure and absolute materialism.

"We recognise," Holbach says in his *Système de la Nature*, "that the essence of matter cannot be understood or, at least, that we understand it only poorly, in the measure that it affects us.... We know matter only from the perceptions, sensations and ideas it gives us; it is only from them that we can judge of it, well or poorly, according to the specific arrangement of our organs," and further: "We know nothing of the essence or true nature of matter though we are able to recognise some of their properties or qualities through the effects they have on us."

This too seems to be fully in the spirit of Kant, does it not? Only it was written before the appearance of his *Critique of Pure Reason*.

But what about Helvetius, who has often been recognised as the most absolute representative of eighteenth-century materialism?

Oh, this one was most circumspect! In his book *De l'Esprit*, he says, in respect of the controversies over the relation of soul to body, that words *should not be misused*, that everything possible should be drawn from observation, and that "one should advance only together with it, stopping the moment it abandons us and having the courage of not knowing what one cannot yet know."

I shall add that, to Helvetius, what in *philosophy* is called the reality of the sensual world, was only *probability*.

Next to all this, Strecker's word *Wir glauben an das Atom*, which Bernstein has cited as a sign of the great changes that have taken place of late in materialist theory, produce a really comical impression. Bernstein sees in these words a confession recently forced out of materialism under the influence of Kant's philosophy. He thinks that the *pure* or *absolute* materialists never said anything of the kind, and did not even suspect it. *You see that this is absolutely untrue*. And when Bernstein says to us: "Let us return to Kant 'bis zu einem gewissen Grad'," we say in reply: "Comrade Bernstein, return bis zu einem gewissen Grad to your classroom; make a study of the theory you wish to criticise, and then we will discuss the matter."

But perhaps you will ask me what is meant by eighteenth-century materialism? What is meant by the materialism of Karl Marx?

The enemies of materialism will reply for me.

Go to the National Library in Geneva, consult Volume 28 of *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne*, and look up the article on La Mettrie. The author of this article says that, besides other books, La Mettrie wrote *L'homme-machine*, a vile work in which the pernicious materialist theory is set forth without the least restraint. But what kind of pernicious theory is it? Listen carefully:

"On noticing, during his illness, that his spiritual faculties had become impaired following the weakening of his bodily organs, he drew therefrom the conclusion that thought is nothing but a product of the physical organisation, and he had the audacity to make public his surmises on this score."

Thus thought is nothing but a product of organisation: such is the true meaning of the theory held by La Mettrie and the other materialists. This may seem audacious, but is it false?

Let us see what Professor Huxley, one of the most outstanding and best-known representatives of present-day biology, has to say on the matter:

"Surely no one who is cognisant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is, nevertheless, far more consistent with fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical entity seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument."

La Mettrie is descended from Descartes; not from the latter's *metaphysics*, which was quite idealistic, but from his physiology. Here is what the selfsame Huxley says about the physiology of Descartes:

"In truth, Descartes' physiology, like the modern physiology of which it anticipates the spirit, leads straight to Materialism, so far as that title is rightly applicable to the doctrine that we have no knowledge of any thinking substance, apart from extended substance; and that thought is as much a function of matter as motion is." (*Les sciences naturelles et l'éducation*, Paris, 1891, article sur le "Discours de la méthode", de Descartes, pp. 25-26)*.

It is true, citizens, that materialism, as evolved in the eighteenth century and accepted by the founders of scientific socialism, is

* [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of Thomas H. Huxley's, *Method and Results*, Essays. "Descartes' discourse on method"].

a theory that teaches us that "we have no knowledge of any thinking substance, apart from extended substance; and that thought is as much a function of matter as motion is". But this is a negation of philosophical dualism, and returns us direct to old Spinoza, with his single substance, of which extension and thought are merely attributes. Indeed, present-day materialism is a Spinozism that has become more or less aware of itself.

I say "more or less aware of itself" because some materialists have been little aware of their kinship with Spinoza. *La Mettrie* was one of these, but even in his lifetime there were materialists who were well aware that they were descended from Spinoza. Diderot is an example, who said the following in a short article entitled *Spinosisme*, published in Volume 15 of *l'Encyclopédie*.¹⁴⁸

Here is what Spinoza says in Theorem XIII of Part Two of his *Ethics*: "Omnia individua quamvis gradibus diversis animata sunt".* This is what Diderot said.

Feuerbach (*Spiritualismus und Materialismus*) and Engels were also Spinozists.

But what is the difference between a materialism thus interpreted, and Kantianism? The difference is a vast one. It all lies in that which refers to the unknowable.

According to Kant, things in themselves are not what we perceive them to be, and the relations between them in reality are not what they seem to us; if we abstract ourselves from the subjective organisation of our senses, all the properties and all the correlations of objects in space and time, and space and time themselves, *vanish*, because all this exists only as a *phenomenon*, i.e., only in us. The nature of things, regarded in themselves and independently of our own faculty of perception, is wholly unknown to us. Of such things, we know only the manner on which we perceive them: consequently, things belong to the area of the *unknowable*. In this, the materialists are far from agreement with Kant.

According to Kant, what we know about things is only the way we perceive them. But if our perception of things does take place, that, again according to Kant, is because *things affect us*. Phenomena are the products of the effect on us of things-in-themselves, *noumena*. However, the exertion of an affect already means being in some relationship. One who says that objects (or things) in themselves affect us is saying that he knows some of the relations of such objects, if not among themselves then at least between them, on the one hand, and us, on the other. But if we know the relations existing between us and things-in-themselves, we also know—through the mediation of our faculty of perception—the

* [All individuals are animate in various degree.]

relations existing between the objects themselves. This is not direct knowledge, but knowledge it is; once we possess it, we no longer have the right to speak of the impossibility of knowing things-in-themselves.

Knowledge means prevision. If we are able to foresee a phenomenon, we shall foresee how some things-in-themselves will affect us. All our industries and all our practical life are based on that prevision.

Consequently, Kant's proposition cannot be supported. Everything correct in it had already been voiced by the French materialists *prior to* Kant: the essence of matter is incomprehensible to us; we gain an understanding of it only in the measure in which it affects us.

This is what Engels said in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach*, and what Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt have failed to understand.

This distinction between materialism and Kantianism may seem inconsequential to you, yet it is highly important, not only from the theoretical point of view but also—and perhaps particularly—from the practical.

Kant's "unknowable" leaves the door wide open to *mysticism*. In my German book *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, I showed that this "unknowable" is nothing else but God, a scholastic God. *Matter*, on the contrary, of which we gain a knowledge in the measure it affects us, totally precludes all and any *theological* interpretation. It is a revolutionary concept, which is why it is not to the liking of the bourgeoisie, who prefer—and very much so—Kant's agnosticism and our present-day Kantians.

When Bernstein calls us back to Kant, and when he criticises present-day materialism with the words "Wir glauben [an das Atom]", he is thereby proving nothing but his own ignorance. Consequently, this alleged crisis presents no danger from the philosophical viewpoint.

Let us now pass on to the materialist understanding of history.

What is meant by that understanding?

That "understanding" has often been very poorly understood and, if that is possible, has been interpreted still more poorly. In its false interpretation, it is vilely defamatory of the human race; but where is that theory which, poorly understood and badly interpreted, will not seem vile and absurd? In reality, the materialist understanding of history is the only theory that enables us to understand human history as a law-governed process. In other words, it is the only *scientific* explanation of history.

To give you an exact idea of the Marxist understanding of history, I shall first ask: what is meant by the idealist understanding? I shall begin by quoting from an eighteenth-century French

author, now completely forgotten, but one who wrote a curious book. He was Cellier Dufayel and the book was entitled: *Origine commune de la littérature et de la législation chez tous les peuples* (Paris, 1786).

"Just as literature is the expression of the litterateur's thinking," he says, "law is, in its turn, the expression of the thinking of the legislator, taking that word in the broadest sense.

"There is then a common source both for literature and for legislation... and that source is thought, whose origin is in man's nature, which should be studied first and foremost, if one would proceed with method and advance with some certitude towards the goal one has set oneself" (p. 7).

Here is an understanding of history that is completely *idealistic*: human thought is the source of law, i. e., of all social and political organisation. The development of that organisation is determined by human thought, which, in its turn, originates in man's nature.

This idealistic interpretation of history is, with few exceptions, peculiar to all philosophers of the eighteenth century, even to the materialists.

The weak point, the heel of Achilles, of this understanding of history will easily be seen. I shall describe it in a few words.

Were one to ask an eighteenth-century writer, say Cellier, how man's ideas take shape, he would reply that they are a product of the social environment. But what is a social environment? It is the totality of those very social relations which, Cellier Dufayel himself asserts, originate in human thought.

Hence we have before us the following antinomy:

- 1) The social environment is a product of thought;
- 2) Thought is a product of the social environment.

As long as we are unable to escape from this contradiction, we shall understand nothing either in the history of ideas or in the history of social forms.

If you take, for instance, the evolution of literary criticism in the nineteenth century, you will see it has been, and in part remains, quite powerless to solve this antinomy. Thus, Sainte-Beuve holds that every social revolution is accompanied by a revolution in literature. But where do social revolutions come from? They are caused by the development of human thought; since, in civilised societies, the evolution of thought finds expression in the evolution of literature, we come up against the same antinomy: the development of literature hinges on social development, while social development is conditioned by the development of literature. Hippolyte Taine's philosophy of art suffers from the same shortcoming.

We shall now see how Marx's understanding of history successfully solves this antinomy.

Marx's materialist understanding of history is the direct opposite of the eighteenth-century understanding.

In a comparison of his own method with that of Hegel, Marx says in the Afterword to the Second German Edition of *Capital*:

*"To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."*¹⁴⁹

This is a materialist understanding of the history of human thought. Engels expressed the same in a more popular form when he said that it is not consciousness that determines being, but being that determines consciousness.

It may, however, be asked: what does a way of life derive from if it is not determined by the mode of thought?

Social man's way of life is determined by his means of subsistence, which in their turn depend on the state of the productive forces at the disposal of social man, i.e., of society.

The productive forces a tribe of savages dispose of determine that tribe's way of life; the productive forces at the disposal of Europeans in the Middle Ages determined the structure of feudal society; the productive forces of our times determine the structure of present-day society, capitalist society, bourgeois society.

You are all no doubt well aware that the types of weaponry determine the organisation of an army, the plans of campaigns, the disposition of units, the orders issued, and so on and so forth. All this creates the profound distinction between the military system of the ancients and that of our days. In exactly the same way, the state of the productive forces, and the means and modes of production, determine the relations existing among producers, i.e., the entire social structure as well. But once we have a social structure as a fact, the way in which it determines the state of men's mores and ideas will be readily understood.

Let us take an example the better to bring the point out.

The reactionaries have often accused the French philosophers of the eighteenth century—the Encyclopedists—of their propaganda having laid the ground for the French Revolution. That propaganda was no doubt a *sine qua non* of the Revolution. It may, however, be asked: why was it that such propaganda should have started only in the eighteenth century? Why was it not conducted in the times of Louis XIV? Where is the answer to be sought? In the general properties of human nature? No, for they were the same in the times of Bossuet and in those of Voltaire. But if the French of Bossuet's times did not hold the same views as did the French of Voltaire's times, it was because of

the change in France's social structure. But what brought that change about? It was France's economic development that did so.

I shall take another example, this time borrowed from the history of French art.

Kindly look at these two engravings made after Boucher, and at these two photographs of two celebrated pictures painted by Louis David. They are representative of two completely different stages in the history of French painting. Note the distinctive features in Boucher's art, compare them with the distinctive features in David's art, and tell me whether the difference that exists between these two painters can be accounted for by the general properties of human nature. For my part, I do not see any possibility of that. Neither do I understand how those properties of human nature could explain to me the transition from Boucher's paintings to David's. Finally, I fail to understand which of the properties of human nature had to lead to the transition from François Boucher's paintings to those of Louis David happening at the end of the eighteenth century, and at no other time. Human nature can explain nothing here. Let us see what the materialist understanding of history will show.

Again, it is not *psychology* but *political economy* that has to account for the evolution of social forms and human thought; it is not consciousness that determines being, but being that determines consciousness.

This understanding of history, which has so often come under attack from bourgeois theorists, has also come under fire from Conrad Schmidt, and will doubtlessly come in for the same treatment from Bernstein in the series of articles he is now publishing in *N[eu]e Zeit*.

Incidentally, these gentlemen are not attacking in the open. On the contrary, they style themselves as adherents of this understanding of history; only they interpret it in a way that makes us appear to be retreating, together with them, from the materialist understanding of history and returning to idealism, or rather to eclecticism.

That was exactly what Conrad Schmidt said in the German journal *Der sozialistische Akademiker*: society's economy is merely an emanation of human nature; the latter is the supreme synthetic unity (*höhere zusammenfassende Einheit*), the foundation on which rests the operation of all the factors of historical development. Only, he goes on to say, that supreme unity always reveals itself in various forms. To understand the falsity of this view, one has only to ask oneself: what are the forces thanks to which man's nature goes over from certain forms to others? What are the forces that make the American Yankee's nature so profoundly different from that of the Redskin? Whatever they

may be, those forces evidently do not lie in human nature. Consequently, the latter is not the supreme synthetic unity that Conrad Schmidt speaks of.

The economic structure of Yankee society is utterly different from the Redskins' economic organisation. To say that the latter is an emanation of human nature means saying absolutely nothing, since the question that has to be answered is: why is one emanation of nature so vastly different from another? On closer examination Conrad Schmidt's sapient remark means nothing but the following: there would be no history but for the existence of the human race. This is what is known as a *La Palisse* truth.¹⁵⁰

Thus, Conrad Schmidt's criticism is far from dangerous to the materialist understanding of history, or, to put it more exactly, it can be dangerous only if Conrad Schmidt is taken for a Marxist.

Let us draw the conclusion. From this angle, too, it is not very difficult to overcome the crisis of the Marxist school. At our next session, we shall see whether there is anything serious in the objections raised by Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt to the *economic* views of *Karl Marx*.

BERNSTEIN AND MATERIALISM

Herr Bernstein continues the second series of his *Problems of Socialism*, in Issue 34 of *Neue Zeit*, where he discusses "*in what measure present-day socialism is realistic, and in what measure it is an ideology*."¹⁵¹ The method employed by the author of this study seems to me quite insufficient for a solution of the question raised therein, which is why I shall subject that method to criticism in another article. What interests me here is Herr Bernstein's call for a return to Kant "up to a certain point". "As a layman in the theory of knowledge," says Herr Bernstein, "I lay no claim to bringing into this question anything more than the thoughts of a layman. In fact, it was an article on Kant, written by Conrad Schmidt and published in the scientific supplement to *Vorwärts!*, that made me take up the subject."

Impelled by a reading of several columns of Herr Conrad Schmidt's philosophical prose, Herr Bernstein informs other laymen of the following: "Pure or absolute materialism is just as spiritualistic as is pure or absolute idealism. The two simply assume, though from different viewpoints, that thinking and being are identical; they differ ultimately only in their mode of expression. The more recent materialists, on the contrary, have taken up a principled Kantian stand just as resolutely as have most of the greatest present-day natural scientists."

These are highly interesting conclusions. But what is "pure or absolute materialism"? Herr Bernstein does not answer this question; instead, he quotes in a footnote a definition given by one of the "more recent" materialists, who says, quite "in the Kantian sense", "We only believe in the atom."¹⁵²

In Herr Bernstein's opinion, the "pure or absolute" materialists could obviously in no way admit the mode of thinking and expression characterised in the definition given above. "In what measure" is this understanding of Bernstein's borne out by the history of philosophy? "That is the question."



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Bernstein und der Materialismus.¹

Von G. Plechanow.

In Nr. 34 der „Neuen Zeit“ legt Genosse Bernstein die zweite Serie seiner „Probleme des Sozialismus“ fort. Er erörtert daselbst „inwieweit der moderne Sozialismus realistisch und inwieweit Ideologie“. Die von ihm bei dieser Untersuchung angewendete Methode erscheint mir durchaus ungeeignet, die aufgeworfene Frage zu beantworten. Ich werde diese Methode deshalb in einem folgenden Artikel einer Kritik unterziehen. Heute interessiert mich die von Bernstein an die Sozialisten gerichtete Aufforderung, „bis zu einem gewissen Grade“ auf Kant zurückzugehen. „Auf dem Gebiet der Erkenntnistheorie Kant, beanfrage ich nicht, mehr wie die Gedanken eines Laien zur Frage beisteuern zu können. Dagegen schulde ich einem Artikel Konrad Schmidt in der wissenschaftlichen Beilage des „Vorwärts“ über Kant unmittelbare Anregung.“

Durch einige Spalten der philosophischen Prosa des Genossen Konrad Schmidt „angeregt“, erzählt Genosse Bernstein anderen Leuten: „Der reine oder absolute Materialismus ist gerade so spiritualistisch wie der reine oder absolute Idealismus. Beide setzen Denken und Sein schlechthin als identisch, wenn auch von verschiedenen Seiten her. Sie differieren in letzter Instanz nur in der Ausdrucksweise. Neuere Materialisten stellen sich dagegen prinzipiell ebenso entschieden auf den Boden Kants, wie dies die meisten der größeren modernen Naturforscher gethan haben.“

Diese Ausführungen sind sehr interessant. Aber was ist „der reine oder absolute Materialismus?“ Genosse Bernstein erklärt das keineswegs, dagegen zitiert er in einer Anmerkung einen Satz eines der „neueren“ Materialisten, der „völlig im Sinne Kants“ sagt: „Wir glauben an das Atom.“ Es ist augenscheinlich, daß nach Bernsteins Auffassung die „reinen oder absoluten“ Materialisten die in vorstehendem Satze charakterisirte Weise des Denkens und Sprechens durchaus nicht hätten gelten lassen. „Inwieweit“ wird diese Auffassung Bern-

¹ Wir eröffnen hiermit die Diskussion der von Bernstein aufgeworfenen „Probleme des Sozialismus“. Unsere Einsetzungen gegen Bernstein sind und zugesagt.

Die Redaktion.

Who shall we number Holbach among: the "pure" or the "more recent" materialists? Evidently among the former. But what does Holbach think of matter?

The following passages will explain that to us:

"We do not know the essence of any object, if by the word essence one is to understand that which comprises its own nature; we know matter only from the sensations and ideas it gives us; then we judge of it, well or badly, in keeping with the arrangement of our organs."*

And further:

"Thus, relatively towards us, matter in general is anything that affects our senses in some way, and the properties that we attribute to different kinds of matter are based on the different impressions or on the changes that they produce in us."**

Here is another brief and characteristic passage:

"We know neither the essence nor the genuine nature of matter, though we are able to determine some of its properties and qualities according to the way in which it affects us."***

Let us now turn to another "pure" materialist, to wit, Helvetius. Does matter possess the power of sensation? Helvetius replies to this question, which held the attention of very many eighteenth-century French philosophers, and to which we shall return later, as follows: "The subject was discussed over a long period.... Only very late was it asked what the argument was all about, and a precise idea was attached to the word matter. Had the meaning been established in the first place, it would have been recognised that *men are, so to say, the creators of matter*."**** I find this somewhat clearer than the statement, "We only believe in the atom".

I have set forth the philosophical ideas of Holbach and Helvetius in my *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, so I shall not go into any detailed examination of them here. I shall, however remark that to Helvetius the existence of bodies outside of us seems only a probability. He makes mock of "philosophical flights of fancy"; in his opinion, we must "go together with observation, halt at the instant it leaves us, and have the courage not to know what is as yet impossible to know".*****

Robinet, author of the book *De la Nature*, remarks: "We have not been made to find out what constitutes the essence of things; we have no means of knowing that *The knowledge of essence (des essences) is beyond our compass*."*****

* *Système de la Nature*, II, p. 1.¹⁶³

** *ibid.*, I, p. 28.

*** *ibid.*, II, p. 116.

**** *De L'Esprit*, Discours I, chap. IV.

***** Cf. *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus*, p. 77 and ff.

***** *De la Nature*, Amsterdam MDCCLXIII, tome premier, p. 265.

Elsewhere in the same book, he says: "The soul is no more instructed in its own essence than in other essences. It does not penetrate into itself more than into the mass of its own body, whose inner resources it neither senses nor sees."* Is this not quite in the Kantian sense?

Let us now listen to La Mettrie, that enfant perdu of materialist philosophy, a man whose boldness daunted even the boldest. Here is what he said:

"The essence of soul in man and animals is unknown to us and will always remain so, just as the essence of matter and body.... But though we have no idea of the essence of matter, we are nevertheless obliged to recognise the properties revealed to us in matter by our external senses."**

In his *Abrégé des Systèmes* La Mettrie writes the following, in a criticism of Spinoza's philosophy:

"...It is not external things that the soul cognises but only certain individual properties of those things, all of them quite relative and arbitrary; finally, most of our sensations and ideas are so dependent on our organs that they change together with the latter...."

As we can see, one of the most "absolute" materialists also speaks here "quite in the Kantian sense". Compared with such statements, one cannot but consider most comical the proposition "We only believe in the atom", which Herr Bernstein cites as something absolutely "new".

Perhaps, Herr Bernstein imagines that Frederick Engels did not know that we only *believe* in the atom? Engels, it may be supposed, knew that very well,¹⁵⁴ but that did not prevent him from waging a struggle against Kantian philosophy and writing the following lines in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*: "If, nevertheless, the Neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian concept in Germany and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where in fact it never became extinct), this is, in view of their theoretical and practical refutation accomplished long ago, scientifically a regression and practically merely a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism while denying it before the world."¹⁵⁵

Perhaps Herr Bernstein will object that Engels himself did not have a clear understanding of the matter?

For many years, Herr Bernstein was in close touch with Frederick Engels,¹⁵⁶ but failed to understand his philosophy. He, who could have drawn so freely on the wealth of that great thinker's

* *ibid.*, p. 259.

** *Œuvres philosophiques de Monsieur de La Mettrie*, Amsterdam MDCCCLXIV, t. 1, *Traité de l'âme*, p. 83 et 87.

knowledge, had to read the quasi-philosophical article by Herr Conrad Schmidt to gain an interest in philosophical questions, and ask himself: wherein lies the essence of my teacher's philosophy? What is still worse, it was sufficient for him to learn a couple of Herr Conrad Schmidt's paralogisms to throw that philosophy overboard. Unbelievable, but a fact. It is very sad for the school of Marx and Engels, but first and foremost it is very sad for Herr Bernstein!

However that may be, we have not the least desire to follow this "critic's advice" when he calls us "*back to Kant*". On the contrary, we call him *back ... to a study of philosophy*.

In advising us to "return to Kant", Herr Bernstein tries to base himself on an article by Herr Stern: "Der ökonomische und der naturphilosophische Materialismus", which was published in *Neue Zeit*. Herr Stern is immeasurably more competent in the field of philosophy than Herr Bernstein is, and his article deserves our readers' full attention.

While Herr Bernstein returns to Kant "to a certain point" Herr Stern speaks to us of the old Spinoza, and asks us to return to the philosophy of that great and noble Jewish thinker. That is something else, and far more reasonable than Herr Bernstein's call. Indeed, it is important and interesting to study the question of whether there is *something in common between the philosophical ideas of Marx and Engels* on the one hand, and Spinoza's on the other.

To be able to reply correctly to this question, we must first ascertain how Herr Stern understands the genuine essence of materialism. Here is what he says:

"*Naturphilosophische* materialism, as represented in Ancient Greece by Democritus and his school, in the last century by the Encyclopedists, and in recent times by Karl Vogt, Ludwig Büchner and so on, and the economic materialism of Marx and Engels are, despite their common name, two different theories, which pertain to different areas of study. The former contains an explanation of Nature and in particular the relations between matter and spirit; the latter proposes an explanation of history, its course and its events, thus being a sociological theory."

That is not quite the case.

In the first place, the philosophy of the Encyclopedists was not limited only to a study of the relations between matter and spirit; on the contrary, *it attempted to simultaneously explain history with the aid of the materialist concept*.^{*} In the second place, Marx and Engels were materialists, not only in the sphere of historical studies *but also in the sphere of an understanding of the*

* I showed that in my essay on Helvetius.

relation between spirit and matter. Thirdly, it is quite erroneous to lump together the materialism of the Encyclopedists and that of Vogt and Büchner. Here, too, it may be said that we have "two quite different theories".

"The fundamental idea of *naturphilosophische* materialism," Herr Stern continues, "is that matter is the Absolute, something everlastingly existent; everything of the spirit (the mental: perception, sensation, will and thinking) is a product of matter. Matter possesses boundless forces ('Stoff und Kraft'), which can in general be reduced to movement, which is also everlasting. Through the interaction of various forces in complex animal organisms, there arises in the latter the spiritual, which again disappears together with their disintegration. Everything that takes place, including human desires and actions, is governed by the law of causality and depends on material causes."

That is how Herr Stern sees the materialist doctrine. Is he right, and can the description he has given be applied, for instance, to the materialism of the Encyclopedists?

Before replying to this question, I would remark that, in this case, the appellation of Encyclopedists is, on the one hand, not at all precise, and leads to error. Far from all the Encyclopedists were materialists. On the other hand, there were, in eighteenth-century France, materialists who did not write a single line in the *Encyclopédie*. To bear that out, it will suffice to name the selfsame La Mettrie.

All this is incidental. What is essential is that *neither the materialists among the Encyclopedists nor La Mettrie recognised that all the forces of matter can be reduced to movement.* Herr Stern seems to have been misled by the words of those who, despite their ignorance of the history of materialism, cannot deny themselves the pleasure of speaking about it. This can be proved immediately and most irrefutably.

This time I shall first let La Mettrie speak for himself.

The reader already knows that La Mettrie's view on matter is worlds apart from "*dogmatism*" of any kind. Yet we must dwell at some length on his philosophy.

La Mettrie was simply a *Cartesian*, a man of consistent thought, who enriched his mind with all the biological knowledge of his times. Descartes asserts that animals are nothing more than machines, that is to say, that they possess nothing that can be called the life of the mind. Taking Descartes at his word, La Mettrie says that if the former is right, then man too is nothing more than a machine because there is no *essential difference* between man and animal. Hence the title of his celebrated work *L'homme-machine*. However, since man in no way lacks mental life, La Mettrie further concludes that animals are also endowed with mental

life. Hence the title of another work: *Les animaux plus que machines*. Incidentally, La Mettrie thought that Descartes himself, in his heart of hearts, held the same view: "For, on the whole, though he harps on the distinction between the two substances, it can be seen that this is nothing but a clever trick, a stylistic device," etc.* Though La Mettrie defines man as a machine, he does not at all say thereby that "*all the forces of matter can be reduced to movement*". On the contrary, he wishes to express something quite different. *He considered thinking one of the properties of matter*. "I believe thinking to be so little incompatible with organised matter that it seems to be a property of the latter in the same way as electricity, the faculty of movement, impenetrability, extent, etc."**

On that basis, Herr Stern will no doubt object that to La Mettrie thinking is a property of organised matter alone, this being the heel of Achilles in any materialism. "It is quite inexplicable," he says in the article we have quoted from, "how, in an animal cell, sensation (the basic physical element) appears *suddenly*, like a pistol shot; it must of necessity be concluded that inorganic bodies, too, possess a psychical quality which is, of course, only minimal and simple, but which becomes more involved and refined as we mount the ladder of living beings". That is so, but La Mettrie never asserted anything to the contrary. Here he simply puts the question, but does not attempt to give a definite answer. "It must be acknowledged," he says, "that we do not know whether matter possesses the immediate faculty of sensation or only the ability to acquire it through modifications or forms it is susceptible of; for it is true that this faculty reveals itself only in inorganised bodies."***

In his *L'Homme plante*, he expresses this idea in a somewhat different form, which makes it more definite. "In effect, Man is that one of all hitherto known beings who possesses soul in the highest degree, as it should be of necessity, while plants are those which should and do possess soul in the least degree." This idea sums up the theory of the "animateness of matter". However, La Mettrie discards this theory because "soul" is something quite embryonic in plants and minerals. "It is an excellent soul, indeed," he exclaims, "which does not occupy itself with any objects and desires, and is without passions, without vices, without virtues and above all without needs, being free even of the need to counter the body's disintegration."

* *Œuvres philosophiques de Monsieur de La Mettrie*, t. X, p. 72.

** *ibid.*, p. 73.

*** *Traité de l'âme*, etc., chap. VI. In this work, La Mettrie still adhered to the old terminology, which he later abandoned.

Herr Stern quotes the scholium to Theorem XIII in Part Two of Spinoza's *Ethics*, which says that all individuals (*individua*) are animate in various degrees (*quamvis diversis gradibus*).

The reader now sees that the *degree* of animation was of decisive significance to La Mettrie, who considered that an inanimate being was one in which the faculty of sensation did not rise above a certain minimum; if he declared that "*thought*" is the outcome of *organisation*, he thereby wished to say that the comparatively higher forms of "*animateness*" could be met only in inorganised "*individuals*".

That is why I see absolutely no substantial difference between *Spinozism* and *La Mettrie's materialism*.

How does the matter stand with the Encyclopedists?

"The first faculty that we meet with in living man and which should be separated from all the others," says Holbach, "is '*sensibility*'" (i.e., sensation—*G.P.*).

"However inexplicable that faculty may appear at first glance, yet, if we examine it at close quarters, we shall find that it is a consequence of the essence and the properties of an organised body in the same way as gravity, magnetism, elasticity, electricity, etc., result from the essence or the nature of certain other bodies.... Some philosophers think that sensibility is a universal quality of matter; in that case, it would be useless to search whence it gets that property which we know in its manifestations. If one admits this hypothesis, then one can distinguish two kinds of sensibilities, in the same way as one distinguishes two kinds of movement in Nature—one known by the name of *living force*, the other by the name of *the force of inertia*;* one is active or living perception while the other is passive or inert. In the latter case, the animateness of a substance would only consist in the absence of impediments to its being active and sensible. In a word, sensibility is either a quality that can be communicated, such as matter, and can be acquired thanks to combination, or else perception is a quality inherent in all matter; in either case an incorporeal being, such as the human soul is supposed to be, cannot be its subject."**

Herr Stern will now see for himself that Holbach's materialist philosophy has nothing in common with the doctrine ascribed by him to the Encyclopedists.

Holbach was very well aware that the forces of matter cannot all be reduced to movement. He had no objections to the hypothesis of the "*animateness of matter*" but he did not stop at this hypothesis because his attention was attracted by another task.

* Holbach's terms *force vive* and *force morte* are no longer in use.

** *Système de la Nature*, t. I, pp. 88-89 et 90-91.

He tried, first and foremost, to adduce proof that, to explain the phenomena of mental life, there is no need for us to presuppose the existence of non-corporeal substance....

Let us go further. Holbach was not the sole author of *Système de la Nature*; Diderot, too, was an outstanding collaborator in it, and he was a materialist. Of what kind was the materialism of this man who, with more justification than anybody else, can be called an Encyclopedist. Diderot displayed his attitude to Spinoza in a short article "Spinosiste", which was published in Volume 15 of the *Encyclopédie*.

"One should not," he writes there, "confuse the old Spinozists with those of modern times. The general principle held by the latter is that matter is sensible, which they demonstrate by the development of the egg, an inert body which, through the sole instrumentality of graduated warmth, passes to the state of a sentient and living being, and by the growth of any animal which, in the beginning, is nothing but a point but which, through the assimilation of plant nutritives—in a word of all substances which serve as nutrition—turns into a big, sentient and living body. Hence they conclude that there exists nothing but matter and that it is sufficient to explain everything; in everything else, they follow the old Spinozism in all its inferences."

This does not show with clarity wherein, in Diderot's opinion, lies the superiority of the new over the old Spinozism; what is quite indubitable is that Diderot recognised Spinozism as a correct doctrine, and had no fear of the conclusions stemming from it. On the whole, it may be said that Karl Rosenkranz was quite right when he wrote, in his well-known book *Diderot's Leben und Werke* (Vol. I, p. 149): "Spinozism, especially beginning with Boulainvilliers, was secretly recognised by all Frenchmen who had gone over, through sensualism, to materialism...."*

How do the nineteenth-century materialists regard the question we are discussing?

Ludwig Feuerbach was quite disparaging of the French eighteenth-century materialists. "Nothing can be more erroneous," he said, "than to derive German materialism from *Système de la Nature* or, what is still worse, from La Mettrie's truffle pasty."** Yet he stood firmly on the ground of French materialism.

Thus, in his *Spiritualismus und Materialismus*, he says: "To the abstract thinker ... thought is an extra-cerebral act; to the physician, it is an activity of the brain." It was this that La Mettrie set out to prove in his *L'homme machine*. "Medicine, general pathology, is the birthplace and source of materialism," Feuer-

* At the same time, it is highly probable and even, perhaps quite true that Diderot denied only what is called Spinoza's *pantheism*.

** *Werke*, B. 10, S. 8, 123.

bach says further on.* Again, La Mettrie says the same thing.** It is common knowledge that his own ailment served as a point of departure for his ideas on the relationship between soul and body.

"But medicine is the source ... not of an extravagant and transcendental materialism ... but of one that is immanent and *rests in and with Man*," says Feuerbach. "But therein lies the Archimedean viewpoint in the dispute between materialism and spiritualism, since it is ultimately a question, not of the divisibility or indivisibility of matter but of the divisibility or indivisibility of Man ... not of matter outside of Man ... but of matter as compressed within the human cranium. In a word, the dispute—when conducted, not without the participation of the head—is about nothing else but the human head."***

That, too, is how the argument was viewed by La Mettrie, Holbach and many other materialists of the *Encyclopédie*. Because they held that opinion, they showed considerable coolness—with some few exceptions—for the theory of the "animateness" of matter that is not "*compressed within the human cranium*". In this respect, too, Feuerbach's point of view was that of the French materialists.

At the same time, it is unquestionable that Feuerbach was willing to be at one with the materialists up to a certain point, but no further. He repeatedly declared that, to him, the truth lay "neither in materialism, idealism, philosophy, nor in psychology"! Whence this departure from a theory which, in essence, contained his own view?

Engels explained it as follows: "Here Feuerbach lumps together ... materialism ... and the special form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite historical stage, namely, in the eighteenth century." As for French materialism proper, Feuerbach lumped it together with "the shallow and vulgarised form in which the materialism of the eighteenth century continues to exist today in the heads of naturalists and physicians, the form which was preached on their tours in the fifties by Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott"¹⁵⁷. I go further than Engels did, and say: Feuerbach was unaware that, in the nineteenth century, he was

* *Werke*, B. 10, S. 128.

** The spiritualists are well aware of this. The author of La Mettrie's biography in *Biographie Universelle ancienne et moderne* describes *L'Homme machine* as "an infamous production, in which the cheerless doctrine of materialism is set forth in plain terms". But what does that doctrine consist in? Here is the explanation: "Having observed, during his malady, that an enfeebling of the moral faculties followed that of his bodily organs, he drew the conclusion that thinking is merely the product of corporal organisation, and had the temerity to publish his conjectures on this score." How horrible! What an absurd pseudodoctrine!

*** Feuerbach, *Werke*, B. 10, S. 128-29.

an actual restorer of eighteenth-century materialism, and that he was a representative of that latter materialism, with all its advantages and shortcomings.

Feuerbach held the view—now shared by Herr Stern—that the French materialists reduced to motion all the forces in matter. I have already shown that this view is wholly erroneous, and that the French materialists were no more “materialistic” in this respect than Feuerbach himself was. However, Feuerbach’s divergence from French materialism is deserving a very great attention because it characterises his own world-outlook just as distinctively as it did that of Marx and Engels.

According to Feuerbach, the source of cognition in psychology is quite different from what it is in physiology. But what is the distinction between these two sources of cognition? Feuerbach’s answer to this question is highly characteristic: “What to me, or subjectively, is a purely mental ... act, is in itself, or objectively, a material and sensuous one.”* As we see, this is the same as what Herr Stern says: “Hunger, for instance, is, materially considered, a lack of certain bodily juices; considered psychically, it is a sense of unease; satiety is, materially, the replenishment of a deficiency in the organism, while psychically it is a sense of satisfaction.” But Herr Schmidt is a Spinozist. Ergo ... ergo. Feuerbach, too, adheres to Spinoza’s viewpoint.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that Feuerbach was as much of a Spinozist as Diderot was in his time.

It is enough to read his writings with some attention and to possess at least some clear idea of the development of modern philosophy—beginning with Spinoza and ending with Hegel—to cast off the least doubt on that score. “Spinoza is the real originator of modern speculative philosophy; Schelling is its restorer, and Hegel its consumator,” he says in one of his most outstanding writings. *Nature*, according to Feuerbach, is the “secret”, the true meaning of Spinozism. “What is it, on closer examination, that Spinoza *logically or metaphysically calls Substance, and theologically God*? Nothing else but Nature.”** This is Spinoza’s strong point; herein lie “his historical significance and merit”. (Nature is Feuerbach’s “secret”, too.—*G.P.*) But Spinoza was incapable of breaking with theology. “For him, Nature is not Nature; the sensuous and antitheological essence of Nature is for him merely an abstract, metaphysical and theological essence.... Spinoza makes Nature one with God”***. Therein lies his “*main shortcoming*”. Feuerbach rectifies that shortcoming in

* Note for Marxists who are going “back to Kant”: Feuerbach’s “in itself” has nothing in common with “an sich” of the author of *Critique of Pure Reason*.

** *Werke*, B. 2, S. 244; B. 4, S. 380.

*** *ibid.*, B. 4, S. 391.

Spinozism by *inserting aut-aut for sive*. "Not '*Deus sive Natura*' but '*aut Deus aut Natura*' is the watchword of truth; where God is identified with Nature ... there is neither God nor Nature, but only a mystical amphiobiological hermaphrodite."*

We have already seen that this was exactly the reproach Diderot levelled against Spinozism, in the article cited above, which was published in the *Encyclopédie*. Herr Stern may possibly object that Spinoza did not deserve the reproach, but that is no concern of ours: what interests us here is the answer to the question of the relation of Feuerbach's philosophy to Spinoza's. As for the answer, it is as follows:

Feuerbach's materialist philosophy was, like Diderot's, merely a brand of Spinozism.

And now let us proceed to Marx and Engels.

For some time, these writers were enthusiastic adherents of Feuerbach. "Enthusiasm was general" (following the publication of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums*—G.P.), Engels wrote: "we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much—in spite of all critical reservations—he was influenced by it, one may read in *Die heilige Familie*."¹⁵⁸

By the February of 1845, however, Marx had, with the insight of genius, seen the "chief defect" of Feuerbach's materialism, namely that "the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively."¹⁵⁹ This criticism became the point of departure in the new phase in the development of materialism, a phase that led up to the *materialist explanation of history*. The preface to Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* contains what might be called "*Prolegomena to any future sociology that could operate as a science*".

Note, however, that Marx and Engels's critique does not bear upon the fundamental viewpoint of Feuerbach's materialism. Quite the reverse!

When Engels wrote that "those who regard Nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism"¹⁶⁰ (see his *Ludwig Feuerbach*) he was merely repeating Feuerbach's words: "The true relationship of thinking to being is only this: Being is the subject, thinking the predicate. Thinking derives from being, not being from thinking."¹⁶¹ Since Feuerbach's viewpoint was that of a Spinozist, it is clear that Engels's philosophical view, which was identical, could not be different.

Strictly speaking, the proposition that "thinking derives from being, not being from thinking" is not in agreement with Spi-

* *Werke.*, B. 4, S. 392.

** *ibid.*, B. 2, S. 263.

noza's doctrine. But the "thinking" in question is *human consciousness*, i.e., the highest form of "thinking"; being as preceding that thinking in no way precludes the "animateness of matter". To realise that, one has only to read page 236 in Volume 2 of Feuerbach's *Werke*, and pages 21 and 22 of Engels's book *Ludwig Feuerbach*. The contempt in which Engels held the materialism of Karl Vogt, Moleschott and the like is common knowledge. However, it was that very materialism which could with some justification be reproached for a striving to reduce all the forces of matter to motion. I am convinced that publication of the manuscripts in the literary heritage of Marx and Engels will cast new light on the question.* Meanwhile, I assert with full conviction that, in the *materialist* period of their development, Marx and Engels never abandoned Spinoza's point of view.¹⁶² That conviction, incidentally, is based on Engels's personal testimony.

After visiting the Paris World Exhibition in 1889, I went to London to make Engels's acquaintance. For almost a whole week, I had the pleasure of having long talks with him on a variety of practical and theoretical subjects. When, on one occasion, we were discussing philosophy, Engels sharply condemned what Stern had most *inaccurately* called "*naturphilosophische* materialism". "So do you think," I asked, "old Spinoza was right when he said that *thought* and *extent* are nothing but two attributes of one and the same substance?" "Of course," Engels replied, "old Spinoza was quite right."

If my recollections are not letting me down, present during our talk was the well-known chemist Schorlemmer. P. B. Axelrod, too, was present. Schorlemmer is no longer alive, but the other interlocutor is, and I feel sure that he will bear out the accuracy of my words.

A few more words: in his preface to *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels speaks, inter alia, of the "pauper's broth of eclecticism" which is ladled out in the universities in Germany under the name of philosophy.¹⁶³ In his lifetime, that splendid broth was not yet being dished out to the German workers. That is now being done by Conrad Schmidt. It is that very broth that has so happily "worked up" Herr Bernstein. Conrad Schmidt is now setting up a school. It would therefore not be superfluous to analyse his eclectic broth with the aid of that sensitive reagent: the philosophy of Marx and Engels. I shall do that in the following article.¹⁶⁴

* When I wrote these lines (in 1898), I had in mind, in the main, Marx's dissertation on Epicurus,¹⁶¹ which had not yet been published and of whose existence I had learnt from Engels as early as 1889. The dissertation was subsequently published in a collection of the early works of Marx and Engels which was brought out by Franz Mehring. However, it did not live up to my expectations, because in it Marx still held the *idealist* view.

WHAT SHOULD WE THANK HIM FOR?

An Open Letter to Karl Kautsky

Dear and esteemed comrade:

Permit me to begin by thanking you for the pleasure I got from your speeches at the Stuttgart Party Congress of German Social-Democrats. The speeches were a political event of great importance, in view of the warm approval of you expressed by the vast majority of delegates to the Party Congress. There was a time when speeches and articles by certain members of the German Party, such as Herren Bernstein, Conrad Schmidt and Heine, could evoke in the hearts of our enemies the fond hope that the German Social-Democrats intended to abandon the revolutionary ground of the *class struggle*, and sink into the morass of opportunism; that hope has now vanished like the morning mist. There can no longer be any doubt. People are coming to realise that Herren Bernstein, Conrad Schmidt, and Heine were not voicing the Party's views, and that Comrade Singer had good reason to say, in his concluding address: we are and shall remain what we have always been. Indeed, German Social-Democracy has remained what it has been always and at all times: the true standard-bearer of the revolutionary thought of our times!

It is to be regretted that one of your speeches contained passages capable of somewhat weakening the overall deep and gratifying impression, and give cause for considerable misunderstandings in the future. I am referring to your speech against Bernstein. Since the controversial points in it could not but have surprised many other people besides myself, I would like to bring them up for discussion in an open letter to you, in lieu of a private talk.

You said in your address: "Bernstein has not discouraged us, but has given us food for thought; we shall be thankful to him for that."

That is true, but only partly so. Indeed, Bernstein has not discouraged the German Social-Democrats, as is shown by the

decisions of the Stuttgart Party Congress. But has he given us any food for thought? Has he been in a position to do so? That is hardly the case, I think.

To provide food for thought, either new facts must be adduced or familiar facts should be presented in a new light. Bernstein has done neither, which is why he has been unable to get anybody to engage in the appropriate thinking.

Perhaps I am mistaken in my appraisal of Bernstein's literary activities. Let us see if that is so.

It goes without saying that we are interested only in that part of his literary activities which has led to his being reproved by some of the comrades. The reference here is to the latter years of his activities. There may be varying opinions of his former literary work, but we have no reason to enlarge on it here.

In recent years, Bernstein has been waging a struggle against what he has called revolutionary phraseology in general and against the "theory of catastrophes" in particular. The gist of his argument against that theory lies in his stating what he considers an indubitable fact, namely that many views voiced by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* have not been confirmed by the ensuing course of social life. "The aggravation of social relations," he says, "has not proceeded in the manner described in the *Manifesto*. It is not only useless but most stupid to turn a blind eye to that. The number of property-owners, far from decreasing, has grown. The tremendous growth of social wealth has been accompanied, not by a rapid fall in the number of capitalist magnates but by a greater number of capitalists of all degrees. The middle strata are changing in character but they are not disappearing from the social ladder." If we add to these thoughts of Bernstein's his remarks that concentration is proceeding very slowly in certain branches of industry and that trade crises should not be expected to be as acute and widespread as before, we shall have every right to say that this exhausts all his arguments against the "theory of catastrophes". And now, esteemed and dear comrade, if you give serious consideration to this line of argument, you will see that it contains nothing, absolutely nothing, that has not already been said on countless occasions by our enemies in the bourgeois camp. In that case, you will also have to admit that we have absolutely no grounds to feel in any way indebted to Bernstein.

You are, no doubt, familiar with the writings of Herr Schultze-Gävernitz. Kindly take his book *Zum sozialen Frieden* and read page 487 et seq. in Volume 2. The author attempts to disprove the "theory of catastrophes", which he formulates as follows: "The development of large-scale industry means the workers be-

ing reduced ever more to the status of the non-differentiated proletariat, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few, the disappearance of the middle classes, and the appearance of the party of social revolution." In Schultze-Gävernitz's opinion, the facts do not fall in with this theory: "The detailed statistics provided by the Board of Trade show the reverse in the case of Britain, this leaving the social-revolutionary trend with nothing to stand on." On one hand, the workers' economic condition has been constantly improving during the last fifty years; on the other hand, "the widespread idea that property is being concentrated in ever fewer hands" has proved erroneous. Last, the spread of joint-stock companies has drawn ever more possessors of small savings into participation in the profits of the big industrial enterprises. In Schultze-Gävernitz's opinion, all these circumstances taken together open the road towards the peaceful solution of the social question.

He voices similar views in another book, *Der Grossbetrieb—ein wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Fortschritt*.

"It is far from true that the rich are becoming richer, and the poor poorer; in fact, just the reverse is taking place, which has been proved statistically in respect of Britain. By the time the industrial employers come to the fore socially and politically, new middle classes arise in their rear, which gain strength first economically, and then politically" (p. 225). Schultze-Gävernitz's arguments and conclusions refer to Britain. He admits that relations are developing differently in other countries, and that in Germany, for instance, "the middle classes are still rapidly diminishing in number". However, he attributes this fact simply to *Germany's backwardness*, thereby indicating that what he considers himself entitled to assert in respect of Britain will hold good in time for Germany as well.

This is not the place to show how one-sided and tendentious these arguments and conclusions of Schultze-Gävernitz's are. That is something that you, esteemed and dear comrade, of course know far better than I do. George Joachim Goschen, one of the researchers who were out to prove that a new middle class is at present in the process of formation in Britain, remarked in a speech he made to the Royal Statistical Society in December 1887: "The expression, derogatory to statisticians, that 'figures will prove anything' ... simply means that figures, which never tell untruths, may be so handled as to present untruths. Figures themselves never lie, but every one must admit that there is no sound and accurate material which can be so easily handled for the special purposes of the compiler as statistics can." These words of Goschen's come to my mind each time I have occasion to turn the leaves of the above-mentioned book by Schultze-Gävernitz,

but that is something I shall not dwell on here. I merely wished to point out to you that Bernstein is merely repeating what Schultze-Gävernitz said several years ago.

But Schultze-Gävernitz has said absolutely nothing new either. Several British statisticians dealt with the same subject before he did, as, for instance, the above-mentioned Goschen, as did several French economists, for instance, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu in his essay on the distribution of wealth and the trend towards the least inequality in social status (Paris, 1881). It will be no exaggeration to say that the works of Schultze-Gävernitz I have quoted from are nothing but a new variation on an old theme dealt with specially and in the greatest detail by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu. Thus, Bernstein is merely giving us a rehash from bourgeois economists. Why then should we thank him, and not those economists? Why should we assert that Bernstein, not they, has given us food for thought? No, most esteemed and dear comrade, we cannot do that. If we really have to speak here of our debt of gratitude, let us be fair and address our thanks to the proper quarters. Let us do so, in general, to all supporters and admirers of "*harmonies économiques*", and, of course, first and foremost to the immortal Bastiat.

Bernstein has often voiced regret that "serious attempts to scientifically implement scientific socialism are still very rare", and, in launching, in his *Problems of Socialism*, a "searching criticism of long-proved Social-Democratic theories and demands", he proudly declares that "any theoretical work consists in a 'searching' criticism of hitherto recognised propositions" and that "if *Neue Zeit* would be the theoretical organ of Social-Democracy, it cannot eschew such 'searching' criticism". "Besides," he goes on to say, "what error was not once a 'long-proved truth'?" And what has been the outcome of his "theoretical work"? Several philistine considerations, such as the importance of the "principle of economic self-responsibility", and then ... a decisive turn towards the theoretical viewpoint of the opponents of scientific socialism. Bernstein presents us with the "truths" of the latest bourgeois economy, imagining that he is "carrying Marx's theory beyond the point it was left at by that great thinker". What strange self-deception! One can only repeat about Bernstein what Faust says of Wagner:

*Mit gier'ger Hand nach Schätzen gräbt,
Und froh ist, wenn er Regenwürmer findet!**

* [Who doth, with greedy hand, for treasure grope,
And finding earthworms, is with joy inspired!]

When the Stuttgart Party Congress was ending its deliberations, Comrade Greulich came out in defence of Bernstein, incidentally stating the following: "I am deeply convinced that our cause can only gain from criticism. German Social-Democracy has received a great heritage from those great thinkers Marx and Engels. But we are dealing here, not with the ultimate truth but with science, which must always take fresh account of the facts." Nothing could be truer, but does Comrade Greulich really think that the great heritage handed down to us by Marx and Engels stands to gain anything from an eclectic fusion with the doctrines of bourgeois economists? Can he, forsooth, make so bold as to call *criticism* something that is an absolutely *uncritical iteration of those doctrines*? Yet, we find in Bernstein nothing but that uncritical iteration. It is only due to that uncritical iteration that he has been able to make us a gift of his *earth-worms*.

Incidentally I shall note that Bernstein has not alone been at fault in revealing such an uncritical attitude towards the doctrines of our opponents, although he has shown it with a particular outspokenness. There are also other of our scholarly comrades who find a fleeting pleasure in trying to prove that they can be "critical" even of Marx himself. With that end in view, they take his theory in the distorted form it has been given by its bourgeois opponents and then triumphantly unleash their "criticism" with the aid of arguments borrowed from those opponents.

Of course, you realise, most esteemed and dear comrade, that it is not socialist theory that stands to gain anything from *this kind of "criticism"*; at best, it will merely enhance *the favour in which such "critics" are held in educated bourgeois quarters*.

Indeed Marx's theory is no ultimate or eternal truth, but it is the *supreme social truth of our times*, and we have just as little ground to downgrade that theory to the level of the "*harmonies économiques*" of the new-fangled Bastiats and Says as to welcome as *serious criticism* the attempts made along the same lines, and to give them our approval.

Please forgive me this digression, most esteemed and dear comrade. I shall now return to Bernstein, namely to the now resounding episode of the "*ultimate aim*".¹⁶⁵

II

After Bernstein had made clear his attitude of indifference to the ultimate aim, he saw himself obliged to explain matters to justify himself, which however led nowhere. When I read his explanations and self-justification, I realised more and more the

usefulness of the old and tested rule that any writer should unswervingly observe, namely, that one should first carefully peruse the proofs of one's articles and only *then send them to the printers*, since corrections made *after publication of an article* rarely help matters. At the same time, I asked myself what could have induced Bernstein to write that article, which patently lacked all logical meaning or, as they say, was without rhyme or reason. At first I thought that he had rehashed in his own way, à la Bernstein, the well-known dictum which, if I am not mistaken, belongs to Lessing: "If the Creator held all the truth in one hand, and, in the other, a striving towards that truth and told me to choose between the two, I would prefer the striving towards the truth to possession of the ready-made truth." But then, I had occasion to turn the pages of *Zum sozialen Frieden*, and saw that this well-known sentence had quite a different origin.

According to Schultze-Gävernitz, the old British economy was hostile to any labour legislation, and could not but be hostile, because that legislation placed restrictions on the individual freedom of adults. Yet, the restrictions on individual freedom were an inescapable outcome of the factory legislation, which, for its part, could not but develop together with the mounting political influence of the working class. These conditions laid the ground, in Britain, for the acceptance and spread of the theory of continental socialism, which had, however, undergone appreciable change, inasmuch as "the assertion that the condition of the worker was hopeless" had, so to speak, lost validity. "Socialism thereby loses its revolutionary edge," Schultze-Gävernitz goes on to say, "and is used to substantiate legislative demands. Hence, it is, in essence, a matter of indifference whether the etatisation of all means of production is accepted or rejected as an ultimate aim; since, if that demand is essential to revolutionary socialism, that is not the case in respect of practical-political socialism, which prefers immediate aims to the distant ones" (*Zum sozialen Frieden*, II, S. 98).

Among the representatives of British "practical-political" socialism is, in Schultze-Gävernitz's opinion, John Stuart Mill, who, though not a socialist in the "spirit of Engels and Marx", yet considers permissible far-reaching state intervention in the individual's economic activities, and is "the first political economist to defend the need to extend protection, in certain conditions, to adult men as well." (*Zum sozialen Frieden*, II, S. 99.) I aver that Eduard Bernstein is now a "practical-political" socialist of the same brand. Schultze-Gävernitz tells us the history of the development of John Stuart Mill's "socialist" views, and does so on the basis of the latter's autobiography. For our part, we can picture to ourselves, in just the same way, the course of Eduard

Bernstein's evolution, with due account of his own explanations, and *linking them together with* the above-quoted ideas of Schultze-Gävernitz regarding the minor significance of the ultimate aim to "*practical-political*" socialists.

After assimilating the view held by Schultze-Gävernitz and other harmonists to the effect that the development of social life in Britain has disproved the views of Engels and Marx, Bernstein has felt drawn to the "practical-political" socialism described by the selfsame Schultze-Gävernitz, from the viewpoint of which the ultimate aim—the etatisation of all means of production—is indeed something almost indifferent if not quite utopian. And now, imbued with the spirit of that socialism, Bernstein has hastened to make public his new attitude to the ultimate aim, Schultze-Gävernitz's above-mentioned remark on the ultimate aim determining, not only the direction of his thoughts but even his mode of expression. Thus, everything becomes quite clear, and his celebrated sentence, which at first glance seemed most absurd, acquires a very clear and very definite meaning. True, Bernstein himself is frightened by that meaning, this being borne out by his explanations and his attempts to justify himself. It is also shown by his letter to the Stuttgart Party Congress, in which he wrote: "The forecast made in the *Communist Manifesto* regarding the development of modern society was correct, inasmuch as it characterised the overall trends in that development." However, what follows next in the letter patently contradicts these words, and if Bernstein himself does not or will not realise that, the contradiction is obvious both to the friends and the enemies of our cause. You stressed that splendidly in your Stuttgart speech when you said: "He" (Bernstein) "explains to us that the number of the wealthy capitalists is growing, so that the foundations on which we have built our views are wrong. Indeed, if that were true then not only would the moment of our victory be put very far off, but we would never arrive at our goal at all."

Comrade Liebknecht expressed himself in much the same way: "If Bernstein's arguments were true, we could then bury our programme and all our past, and would cease to be a proletarian party."

On the other hand, Professor Julius Wolf wrote the following shortly after the appearance of Bernstein's article "The Struggle of Social-Democracy, and Revolutions in Society": "The importance of his words cannot be exaggerated. They are a punch in the face to present-day socialist theory, an open declaration of war against it." ("Illusionisten und Realisten in der National-ökonomie", *Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft*, 1898, Heft 4, Seite 251.)

I have not the least desire to dispute Bernstein's right to engage in fisticuffs against that very party whose views he formerly preached. Anyone is entitled to change his views. However, he should not have tried to convince us that the change in his views is of no substantial significance. He should have known and understood that his new views inevitably lead to the "social peace" preached by Herr Schultze-Gävernitz and his ilk. In short, Bernstein had every right to wage battle against Social-Democracy, but he should have done so with his intentions declared. Since he has not done that, he deserves, not our gratitude but bitter rebuke. During the Renaissance and even earlier, there were scholars who did their best to prove that some philosophers of antiquity were Christians. It goes without saying that they actually proved, not what they had set out to but what they had no intention of proving, namely, that they had themselves abandoned the stand of *Christianity* and had become *pagans*. Something of the kind has happened to our "scholars", who have taken Bernstein under their wing; they have not proved that Bernstein has remained true to socialism ("in the spirit of Engels and Marx"), but that they are themselves infected with the views of the bourgeois "social-politicians". World Social-Democracy should be on the alert against such "scholars", otherwise they can cause it a good deal of harm.

III

The instance of Bernstein is highly instructive to anybody who would give thought to the matter; it is only in this sense that I will say, together with you, most esteemed and dear comrade, that Bernstein deserves our thanks. The history of his conversion from a Social-Democrat into a "social-politician" should always draw attention from all thinking members of our Party. Comrade Liebknecht ascribed this defection to the influence of the British conditions. "A mind like Marx," he said, "had to be in Britain ... in order to ... write his *Capital*. As for Bernstein, he has been impressed by the tremendous ... development of the British bourgeoisie." But is it really necessary to be a Marx to avoid falling under the influence of the British bourgeoisie, while living in that country? As I see it, there are quite a number of comrades in the ranks of the German Social-Democrats who, though they have lived in Britain, have remained true to socialism ("in the spirit of Marx and Engels"). No, the reason is not that Bernstein is living in Britain but that he has gained a poor knowledge of that very scientific socialism that he has undertaken to "implement scientifically". I know that many people may find this unbelievable, but it is true.

In my article "Bernstein and Materialism", which was published in *Neue Zeit*, I showed how infinitesimal this man's knowledge of philosophy is, and how erroneous in general his ideas of materialism. In the article I am now writing for *Neue Zeit* I shall show how poorly he has mastered the materialist understanding of history.¹⁶⁶ I shall now ask you to note how amazingly little he has understood of the theory of catastrophes, which he has "critically" risen up against.

Here is how he sets forth "the understanding now predominant among Social-Democrats of the course of the development of present-day society":

"According to this understanding, an economic crisis of vast force and extent will sooner or later, in view of the impoverishment it brings about, so passionately inflame hearts against the capitalist economic system, and so irrefutably convince the masses of the impossibility, under the domination of that system, of guiding the given productive forces for the common weal that the movement against that system will acquire an irresistible force, and the system will collapse under its pressure. In other words, the great and irresolvable economic crisis will grow into an all-embracing social crisis, whose outcome will be the political domination of the proletariat as the sole consciously revolutionary class, and the complete transformation of society in the socialist sense, under the rule of that class."

Please tell us, most esteemed and dear comrade, is it in that light you have seen the social "catastrophe" which will come about sooner or later as the inevitable outcome of the class struggle? Are you, too, of the opinion that such a "catastrophe" can be the result only of a vast and universal economic crisis? I think that is hardly the case. Moreover, I think that, for you, the future victory of the proletariat is not of necessity linked with an *acute* and universal economic crisis. You have never seen the matter in such schematic terms. As far as I can remember, nobody else has understood the matter in that way. True, the revolutionary movement of 1848 was preceded by the crisis of 1847, but it does not hence follow that a "catastrophe" is unthinkable without a crisis.

It is also true that an exacerbation of the class struggle can hardly be counted on during a sharp economic upswing. Who, however, can guarantee a continuous industrial upswing in the future? Bernstein thinks that, in view of the present-day international means of communication, acute and general crises have become impossible. Let us assume that is the case and that the business slump, as stated as early as 1865 by the French economist Batbie, will be only partial, "l'engagement des produits ne sera que partiel". But then, nobody denies the possibility of a repe-

tition of the terrible "trade depression"* we have just gone through. Does not a depression of that kind show most tellingly that present-day society's productive forces have outgrown its production relations? And is it indeed so difficult for the working class to realise the meaning of that phenomenon? The fact that periods of industrial depression, with their concomitant unemployment, need and hardships, extremely aggravate the class struggle has been graphically shown by the example of America.

Bernstein passes all these considerations by. He makes all our expectations of the future hinge on an acute and universal economic crisis, and, after saying that such crises can hardly occur in the future, he imagines that he has done away with the entire "theory of catastrophes". He gives us his patterns and then proves to us that these *patterns* are absolutely *stereotype*. After that, he voices the utmost delight at these cheap triumphs. This is to be seen in the tone in which he instructs the "dogmatists".

You remember, of course, most esteemed and dear comrade, how very many comrades at the Stuttgart Party Congress rebuked Parvus for the tone in which he waged his polemic against Bernstein. I, too, think that had Parvus polemised in a different tone, Bernstein would have had no pretext to fall silent. The whole world would then have clearly seen the amazing poverty of Bernstein's thinking. That is why I, too, regret that Parvus did not keep himself in check, but at the same time I can fully understand his indignation. As I see it, he was fully justified by the circumstances as well. Besides, none of those who rebuked Parvus paid due attention to the unpleasant tone used by Bernstein himself, one of a smug pedant. When I read Bernstein's didactics addressed to the "dogmatists of German and, in part, of British Social-Democracy", I said to myself: had Sancho Panza been appointed, not governor of an island but professor of social sciences, and had his natural common sense become suddenly clouded over, he would have fallen into no other tone but Bernstein's. I know that *de gustibus non est disputandum*—there is no arguing about tastes—but I do think that many people find that tone much less to their liking than one that is ardent and passionate.

You have yourself admitted, most esteemed and dear comrade, that you were amazed by the vapidity of the series of articles which Bernstein has so pregnantly entitled *Probleme des Sozialismus*. Yet you say that these vapid articles have given you food for thought. You are predisposed in favour of Bernstein and, for that reason, you are very much in the wrong.

* [These two words are in English in the original.]

"Bernstein has been reproached," you said at Stuttgart, "for his articles weakening our confidence in victory, and tying the hands of the fighting proletariat. I do not share that view.... If Bernstein's articles have indeed made one person or other falter in his convictions, then that would merely prove that there is no reason to feel sorry over such people, that their convictions are not very deep rooted, and that they have grasped at the first opportunity to turn their backs on us; in that case we can only feel glad that this has taken place now, and not during a catastrophe, when we shall stand in need of each and every man."

Who could have been discouraged by Bernstein's articles? Obviously only one who has, even if temporarily, adopted Bernstein's new point of view. The transition to that point of view must inevitably lead any logically thinking man to a complete break with the old Social-Democratic programme. But this kind of change of front cannot go unpunished, and must inevitably, if only temporarily, sap the energy of one who has made that change; besides, the energy of those who have adopted Bernstein's point of view has very little in common with that characteristic of a Social-Democratic party confident of victory. Such people must of necessity understand the struggle differently from the way we do, and consequently their confidence of victory must also be substantially different from ours. That is why it has to be said that the energy needed by our Party has been weakened in direct proportion to the number of those who have joined forces with Bernstein if only temporarily. Like you, I also think that international Social-Democracy has no reason to attach particular importance to such people's loyalty; on the contrary, it has every reason to wish that such people should leave its ranks before the hour of grave trial strikes. In my opinion, your rigorous judgement of such people is well grounded, but it seems to me that you are inconsistent, and that, if you decided to be consistent, you should have passed even severer judgement on a man under whose influence such people have fallen, i.e., on Eduard Bernstein himself.

I have no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of German Social-Democracy or to decide whether you should have accepted Bernstein's articles for *Neue Zeit*, or not. Nothing of the kind has occurred to me, but you are well aware, most esteemed and dear comrade, that at Stuttgart matters came up for discussion which are of tremendous significance to Social-Democrats the world over. It is only for that reason that I have decided to address you with this letter. You say that, properly speaking, the polemic with Bernstein is only beginning. I am not quite in agreement with that, since the questions posed by Bernstein were, in considerable measure, brought closer to solution by

Parvus's articles. This is a great service rendered by Parvus to the proletariat of all lands. But that is not what I am referring to. What is most important is that, in returning to the polemic with Bernstein, we must recall the words of Liebknecht, which I have already mentioned: were Bernstein right we could bury our programme and all our past. We must insist on that, and *frankly explain* to our readers that the matter can be worded as follows: who is to bury whom, *whether Bernstein will bury Social-Democracy or Social-Democracy will bury Bernstein*. As for me, I do not doubt and have never doubted the outcome of this controversy, but, most esteemed and dear comrade, permit me, in closing my letter, again to ask you the following question: do we really owe a debt of gratitude to a man who has dealt such a savage blow at socialist theory and (consciously or unconsciously—that makes no difference) is out to bury that theory, to the delight of the concordant "reactionary mass"? No, and a thousand times no. It is not our gratitude that such a man deserves!

Yours sincerely,
G. Plekhanov

CANT AGAINST KANT, OR HERR BERNSTEIN'S WILL AND TESTAMENT

(*E. Bernstein, Historical Materialism.*
Translated by L. Kantsel.
Second Edition. St. Petersburg, 1901)

Dead is my boy, dead and gone,
dear Kasyanovna....

*Nekrasov*¹⁶⁷
Die Todten reiten schnell.

*G. A. Bürger*¹⁶⁸

Herr Bernstein has ceased to exist for the school of Marx, to which he once belonged. He no longer provides any grounds for irritation: after all one cannot feel irritation against the dead. It is now quite useless to feel regret over him: regret can change nothing. Yet, we should pay our last respects to the departed, so we shall devote several pages to his book, which has created so much ado in socialist circles all over the civilised world, and has been translated into Russian, in which language it has now come out in a second edition in St. Petersburg.

It is common knowledge that, in this book, Herr Bernstein has subjected the theory of Marx and Engels to a "critical revision". For our part, we shall make some critical remarks concerning the results of that "revision".

I

Herr Bernstein has remarked that "the most important element of the basis of Marxism, i.e., its fundamental law, one that runs through its entire system, is its specific historical theory, which bears the name of historical materialism". That is wrong. Indeed, the materialist explanation of history is one of the main distinctive features of Marxism, but that explanation comprises merely a *part of the materialist world-outlook of Marx and Engels*. That is why critical research into their system should begin with a critique of the general *philosophical* foundations of that world-outlook. And since its method is indubitably the soul of any philosophical system, any critique of the *dialectical method* of Marx and Engels should naturally precede a "revision" of their historical theory.

True to his erroneous view of the "fundamental law" of Marxism, Herr Bernstein begins with a criticism of the materialist understanding of history and it is only in the second chapter of his book that he goes over to an appraisal of the dialectical method.

For our part, we shall remain faithful to our view concerning the decisive importance of method in any serious system, and shall begin with *dialectics*.

What has Herr Bernstein to say about dialectics?

He does not refuse to recognise that it has some merits. Moreover, he acknowledges that it has had a useful influence on historical science. In his words, F. A. Lange was quite right when he said in his *Labour Question* that Hegelian historical philosophy and its fundamental proposition—development through opposites and their reconciliation—may be called an almost anthropological discovery (p. 39). However, together with that self-same Lange, he thinks that “both in the life of the individual and in history, development through opposites does not take place with such ease and so radically, with such precision and symmetry, as in speculative constructions” (same page). Marx and Engels failed to realise that, which is why dialectics exerted a deleterious influence on their social-political views. True, the founders of scientific socialism felt averse to contemplative constructions. Convinced materialists, they tried “to turn that dialectics right side up again”, which, with Hegel, “stood on its head”, i.e., *upside down*. But Herr Bernstein thinks that solving such a problem is not so easy: “as always happens in reality, as soon as we abandon the ground of empirically established facts and begin to think by by-passing them, we find ourselves in the world of derived ideas; if, in that case, we follow the laws of dialectics as established by Hegel, we shall find ourselves, before even being aware of that, again in the clutches of the ‘self-development of notions’”. Herein lies the great scientific danger to the Hegelian logic of contradictions” (This should read: *the danger of the logic of contradictions*. We say: Mme. Kantsel has translated Herr Bernstein very poorly) (p. 37). Failing to see that danger, Marx and Engels were unable to avoid it, and were therefore often led into error by their own method. Thus, for instance, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* they voiced the idea that, in Germany, the bourgeois revolution could be an immediate prologue to the workers’ revolution.¹⁶⁹ This supposition (“*could be*”) proved groundless: the bourgeois revolution of 1848 did not serve as an immediate prologue to the workers’ revolution. Why was it that Marx and Engels were mistaken? *Because they adhered to dialectics*. That, at least, is what Herr Bernstein says. Another instance: since, in 1885, Engels, writing on the occasion of a new edition of Marx’s booklet *Enttüllungen über den Kommunistenprozess*, and, in 1887, in the preface to his booklet *Zur Wohnungsfrage*, expressed ideas which, in Bernstein’s opinion, are hard to reconcile with his violently negative attitude to the well-known rebellion of the “young” in the

German Social-Democracy, that took place several years later,¹⁷⁰ *here again the blame lies with dialectics*. If the reader has the least doubt of this statement, he has only to read the following passage: "This ambiguity, which is so little in keeping with Engels's character, ultimately sprang from the dialectics borrowed from Hegel" (p. 44). Regrettably enough, this sentence does not contain the least trace of "ambiguity". If, convinced of this, you will ask Herr Bernstein why it is that dialectics is conducive to ambiguity, you will get the following explanation: "its 'yes is no, and no is yes', instead of 'yes is yes, and no is no'; its mutual transition of opposition, and its conversion of quantity into quality, and other dialectical pearls have always been an obstacle to a clear-cut idea of the significance of recognised changes" (same page).

If "dialectical pearls" have *always* hampered any clear-cut idea of changes that take place in reality, then the dialectical method is obviously erroneous in its very essence and should be utterly rejected by all those who, holding the truth dear, aspire towards a correct understanding of Nature and social life. The only question that remains unsolved in this connection is: how have dialectical "pearls" which are far removed from any beauty led Hegel and his philosophy of history to what Herr Bernstein, echoing Lange, has acknowledged to be an "almost anthropological discovery"? The little word "*almost*", which Herr Bernstein stresses so heavily, explains nothing in this case and can only serve as fresh confirmation of the old truth that *words* are in place only where *notions* are absent.¹⁷¹ Incidentally, Herr Bernstein could be made a gift of this "*ambiguity*" if he made the least attempt to *prove* the justice of his opinion regarding the harm of "dialectical pearls". However, with him, proofs are conspicuously absent: he has nowhere to get them from, *since he himself has not made so bold as to assert that he has ever studied Hegel*. If it came into his head to claim to have done so, it would be very easy to show that he is ... in error. That is why Herr Bernstein has not even attempted to prove his opinion, which he has simply *voiced*, believing, with good reason, that naive readers will always be found who will not only take his word but will even admire his profundity of thought.

II

Habent sua fata libelli, the Romans said. Writers, too, have their fates, and at times most strange fates. Let us take Hegel as an example. How *few* in number are those, who have gone to the trouble of studying his philosophy; at the same time, how *numerous* are those "critics" who permit themselves to pass helter-skelter judgement on it! The selfsame frivolous people

would be profoundly shocked if someone took upon himself to condemn Herr Bernstein's book, without even reading it. Whence such different yardsticks? Why is it that such frivolity is permissible in respect of the great Hegel whereas it will be generally considered impermissible in respect of the petty Herr Bernstein? "That is the question."*

If Herr Bernstein *knew* the subject he judges of so naively and so clumsily, he would, of course, feel shame at his opinion of dialectics. He thinks that the dialectical "yes is no, and no is yes", by hampering a sober attitude towards reality, places us in the power of the "self-development of notions". But just that is the shortcoming in the metaphysical thinking, whose devices Herr Bernstein characterises with the formula "yes is yes, and no is no".

"Youth is wont to engage in abstractions," says Hegel, "whereas one who has experience of life is not carried away by the abstract 'either ... or', but adheres to concrete ground." These simple words can provide a highly satisfactory characterisation of the difference between dialectics, on the one hand, and thinking according to the following formula, so dear to Herr Bernstein's heart: "yes is yes, and no is no", on the other.

That formula is the selfsame "*abstract either ... or*", a proneness to which, according to Hegel, is peculiar to youth. That the "*abstract either ... or*" hampered, for a long time, the proper posing of questions in social life and even in the natural sciences is something that is now known to all and sundry. In our country, the distinctive nature of a *dialectical* attitude to the object of study was revealed very popularly and clearly by the late N. G. Chernyshevsky. From the viewpoint of dialectics, "a definitive judgement can be made only in respect of a definite fact after all the circumstances it depends on have been examined.... For instance, is rain a blessing or an evil? This is an abstract question which cannot be answered definitively: rain is sometimes useful but sometimes, 'if more rarely, causes harm; one should ask definitively: has rain been useful if it fell after the wheat sowing has been completed, and it lasted for five hours? In this case a definitive answer can be given: yes, it has been useful." It was from the same angle that, according to Chernyshevsky's absolutely correct explanation, Hegel's dialectical philosophy looked upon social phenomena. Is war ruinous or beneficial? "In general one cannot reply here in any decisive terms: one should know which war is in question.... The Battle of Marathon was a most beneficial event in the history of mankind." But examining phenomena from this angle means placing their study on a *concrete ground*.

* [These words are in English in the original.]

That is why dialectical philosophy has recognised, to quote from Chernyshevsky, that "the former general phrases used to judge of good and evil, without any examination of the causes that have given rise to a definite phenomenon—these general and abstract dicta are unsatisfactory. There is no abstract truth; truth is always concrete".

At first glance, this might seem self-evident, but that is so only to one *who—consciously or unconsciously—has taken up the stand of dialectics* and does not consider the "*abstract either ... or*" (in other words, the formula: "yes is yes and no is no") the most important device in thinking. For instance, ask Count Leo Tolstoy whether Chernyshevsky's words about war, which we have just quoted, are correct or not. He will answer that they are quite wrong since war is an *evil*, and evil can never be *goodness*. Count Tolstoy passes judgement on all questions from the viewpoint of the "*abstract either ... or*", this stripping his conclusions of any serious significance. Dialectics is entirely alien to him as a *thinker*, which, incidentally, explains his instinctive revulsion for Marxism. It is regrettable that Chernyshevsky himself often forgot that "truth is always concrete". In his political economy, he was himself often prone towards the "*abstract either ... or*", but this indisputable fact presents no interest to us at present. It is important for us here to remind our readers how Chernyshevsky understood so well and explained so simply and tellingly (in his *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature*) the incompatibility of the dialectical view and abstract judgements.

Anarchists often ask Social-Democrats whether they recognise the freedom of the individual, to which the latter reply that they do, but only conventionally, because *absolute freedom* for one person means *absolute slavery* for all those surrounding him, i.e., *converts freedom into its opposite*. This kind of reply is not to the liking of the anarchists, who seem sincerely to consider the Social-Democrats *enemies of freedom* and, for their part, have proclaimed *unrestricted, i.e., absolute freedom* of the individual. The conversion of freedom into its opposite is seen by them as sheer sophistry or—as some of them might well put it after getting acquainted with Herr Bernstein's terminology—*one of the pearls of Hegelian dialectics*. The anarchical doctrine of freedom is utterly imbued with the spirit of the "*abstract either ... or*" (*either freedom or despotism*); it is completely built on the formula, so favoured by Herr Bernstein: "*yes is yes and no is no*", while the Social-Democrats regard the question of freedom *from the concrete point of view*. They remember that *there is no abstract truth*, and that *truth is concrete*. In this respect, they are imbued with the *spirit of dialectics*.

Of course, Herr Bernstein will willingly condemn the anarchical doctrine of freedom and will agree with the impossibility of abstract truth. Inasmuch as he will express himself in this sense, he will himself go over to the viewpoint of *dialectics*. However, he will do that *unconsciously*, in consequence of which he will be unable to get out of the muddle of notions he has fallen into. Molière's M. Jourdain could speak in tolerable prose without even suspecting the existence of prose speech.¹⁷² But when dialectics comes up for discussion by people capable only of an unconscious use of the dialectical method, they will say nothing about it except sheer nonsense.

The search after concrete truth is a distinctive feature of dialectical thinking. This very thought was expressed by Chernyshevsky when he said that, since the times of Hegel, "explaining reality has become the bounden duty of philosophical thinking" and that "hence the extraordinary attention to reality, to which no thought had formerly been given and which had been cruelly distorted to please one's own one-sided prejudices".

If that is so—and that is indeed so—one can easily understand the role played by dialectics in the *development of socialism from a utopia into a science*.

The French Enlighteners of the eighteenth century looked upon social life from the angle of the abstract oppositeness of good and evil, of reason and stupidity. They were constantly "falling into abstractions". Suffice it to recall their attitude towards *feudalism* which they saw as an utter *absurdity*, and flatly refused to acknowledge that there had been a time when it was, in its way, a *rational* system of social relations. One can sometimes discern in the utopian socialists a profound dissatisfaction with eighteenth-century abstract thinking. Indeed, in their treatment of *history*, some of them sometimes abandon the abstract formula "*yes is yes, and no is no*" in favour of the dialectical point of view. However, this has been *only at times*, the vast majority of them remaining satisfied, in the overwhelming majority of cases, with the "*abstract either ... or*" in their disquisitions of *social life*. All their systems are imbued with the spirit of that "*either ... or*", and it is that "*either ... or*" that has given their systems their *utopian nature*. To turn from a *utopia* into a *science*, socialism had to outgrow this device in thinking, and rise to the dialectical method. It was Marx and Engels who carried out this necessary reform in socialism: however, they could do so *only because* they had previously gone through the school of Hegelian philosophy. They themselves freely acknowledged that they owed very much to the dialectical method but it pleases Herr Bernstein that this should be otherwise. He has told us that the development of socialism from a utopia into a science

took place *despite* dialectics, not *thanks to* it. (This of course, is very strong wording, but is just as lacking in proof as the outstanding thought once voiced by Mr. L. Tikhomirov in his booklet *Why I Stopped Being a Revolutionary*, namely, that Russian literature developed *thanks to* the autocracy, not *despite* it.)

Herr Bernstein is firmly convinced that Hegel and his pupils looked down on clear-cut notions, considering them *metaphysics*. The reader has already learnt from Chernyshevsky's words what close attention to reality was demanded by Hegel's dialectical philosophy. However, close attention to reality is impossible without clear-cut notions, which is why one has to assume that, in this case too, Herr Bernstein has failed to understand the great thinker. Indeed, that is how the matter stands, in proof of which it will suffice to read (and, of course, understand) Paragraph 80 of Hegel's big *Encyklopädie*, which runs as follows:

Paragraph

"Thinking, as intelligence, stops short of clear-cut determinateness and its distinction from any other determinateness; it regards such limited abstraction as existing for itself and endowed with being."

Supplement to Paragraph

"Rational thinking should first and foremost be given its due, and in the same way recognition should go to the service it has rendered inasmuch as without rational thinking it is impossible to arrive at anything firm and definite either in the area of theory or in practice. Cognition begins with existing things being taken in their definite distinctions. Thus, for instance, in a study of Nature, distinctions are made between individual substances, forces, kinds, etc. and are denoted in this isolation. Science's further success consists in a transition from the viewpoint of the *ratio* to that of *reason* which studies each of these phenomena—as registered by the ratio as separated by a precipice from all the others—in the process of its transition into another phenomenon, in the process of its inception and destruction."

Anyone capable of seeing, behind *words*, the *notions* linked with them will agree—unembarrassed by Hegel's terminology which sounds so strange today—that the road of investigation he has indicated is that very road following which the science of today—for instance, natural science—has arrived at its most outstanding theoretical achievements.

Far from ignoring the rights of the *ratio* (and consequently of *clear-cut notions*) Hegel energetically defended its rights even in areas which might seem very far removed from the "rational"

i.e., in philosophy, religion and art. He made the refined remark that any successful work of drama presupposes a number of clear-cut characters. As for philosophy, that, in his words, *calls first and foremost* for precision (Präzision) of thought!*

But what does the real character of Hegelian philosophy matter to Herr Bernstein? Of what concern to him is Hegel's *Encyklopädie* in general, and any of its paragraphs in particular? He is well aware that he will always find readers who will applaud him even if they notice his errors. *He actually "criticises" Marx! He is attempting to destroy the Marxist "dogma".* That is quite enough today to win resounding fame. Of course, it is also not a bad idea to make a study of what you are out to criticise, but that can well be got along without....

Herr Bernstein sets great store by his own common sense, but Engels was quite right when he said that common sense is a good thing only as long as it does not emerge from the confines of its own competence. The lengths to which Herr Bernstein's words have taken him are shown by the following consideration he has voiced, not, incidentally, in the book under review but in an article he published in *Neue Zeit* after the appearance of the book.¹⁷³

In his well-known work on Ludwig Feuerbach, Engels says that the world as seen by dialectics is a sum of *processes*, in which *things* and their images in the mind, i.e., *notions*, do not remain immobile, but are in a state of constant change. In principle ("prinzipiell"), Herr Bernstein "of course" finds this proposition a correct one, but he is unaware of the limits within which it remains correct, and of the way the words "*constant change*" are to be understood. As he puts it, *the changes the organism of any particular man is subject to are nevertheless incapable of turning him into a creature of quite a different kind.* Such profundity of thought might well have been envied by Sancho Panza himself. Yet does Herr Bernstein really think Hegel and the Hegelians were capable of losing sight, even for a single instant, of so profound, long-standing and praiseworthy a truth? As though foreseeing the appearance of "critics" à la Bernstein, Hegel drew the attention of his listeners to the development of any given phenomenon being able to make *actual* only that which is contained within it as a *possibility* (an sich). He quoted *plants* as an example, saying that though a plant does change, that takes place in accordance with the nature of its embryo, so that the plant "is not simply lost in its infinite change".** After that, judge for yourselves whether there was any need for Herr Bernstein's profound remark!

* G. W. F. Hegels Werke, Bd. IV, S. 150-51.

** Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Erster Theil, Hegels Werke, Bd. III, S. 34-35.

III

Herr Bernstein asserts that Marx exaggerated the rapidity of the historical advance. This is true in respect of Marx's view regarding the development of *capitalist* society. But *why* was Marx disposed towards that exaggeration? Here too, Herr Bernstein puts the blame on *dialectics*. Again, *this* aspect of the influence exerted by dialectics is seen by him as most harmful and dangerous, and it is this aspect that makes him steer clear of the "pearls of dialectics". Unfortunately, however, that aspect, too exists only in his imagination.

According to Hegel, the *logical* process of negation takes place *outside of time*. However, the *actual* processes of the negation of one natural phenomenon by another, or of one social system by another are determined, *in the rapidity of their course, by their own nature*, and by the *concrete conditions* in which they take place. In his polemic with Dühring and in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels refers to the development of the Universe as a dialectical process. *Did he exaggerate the rapidity of this process*, which, in his own words, called for extremely lengthy periods of time? We do not think so. Even were he to have fallen into that error, it would have been the fault, not of dialectics but of some other circumstances: an insufficient knowledge of natural history, a lack of attention to the subject, or something like that. The influence of dialectics on his judgement of the speed of such processes would, in that case, have been just as negligible as that of the complexion of the Empress of China.

Let us take another example, this time from the sphere of *history*. Contraposing his dialectical method to Proudhon's abstract thinking, Marx wrote in his *Misère de la Philosophie*: "It took the whole three centuries in Germany to establish the first big division of labour, the separation of the towns from the country."¹⁷⁴ Was the speed of historical development exaggerated here? There does not seem to be any exaggeration here either, but even if there is, dialectics has nothing at all to do with it.

Here is a third example, which bears upon *contemporary* social life. As is common knowledge, Lassalle was a firm adherent of the dialectical method, but this firm adherent of the dialectical method thought it would take from a hundred to two hundred years for the gradual elimination of "landed and capitalist property" (*des Grund- und Kapitaleigenthums*). To judge by Herr Bernstein's frame of mind today, he may be expected to find even such a period too brief. He probably thinks, like Rodbertus, that the elimination just mentioned will take at least five hundred years. That is his own affair, but Marx would have probably said that Lassalle wanted more time than was necessary for the radical

reconstruction of society. Hence it follows that the Hegelians, who were all agreed in recognising the importance of the dialectical method, could appraise in highly different ways the pace of contemporary social development. Consequently if any particular adherent of dialectics really exaggerates that speed, that should be ascribed to something else but in no way to dialectics.

"We know," says Herr Bernstein, "that we think and know sufficiently well in what way we think. But we shall never learn how that takes place; in what manner consciousness arises from external impressions, the excitation of the nerves, or from a change in the position and the interaction of the atoms of the brain."

It is true that we shall never learn how consciousness arises in us, but that is not the point; the question is whether our ignorance can serve as an objection to *materialism*. "Critical" thinkers such as F. A. Lange, and even physiologists such as Du Bois-Reymond thought that it *could*; the present author is of the opinion that it *cannot*. We have proved that by excerpts from the works of La Mettrie, cited in an article directed against Herr Bernstein.¹⁷⁵ He has taken offence at us for the article but, as the reader will now see, he has understood absolutely none of our objections.

"Attempts have been made," Herr Bernstein continues, "to account for this by ascribing to the atom a certain degree of capacity for consciousness, a degree of animateness in the sense of the monad doctrine."

Indeed, *attempts have been made*. Among the authors of such attempts was, as pointed out in our article, the *materialist* La Mettrie, though a comparison of his doctrine with Leibnitz's doctrine of monads is somewhat far-fetched. Herr Bernstein says nothing of La Mettrie himself, though he thinks, in general, that "this" (the reference is to the above-mentioned attempt) "is an image in the mind, an assumption forced on us by our mode of thinking and our need of an integral world-outlook."

If the reader has understood this we can only congratulate him most sincerely because he has been more fortunate than the author of these lines, or Herr Bernstein himself, who does not seem to understand what he says. *This is nothing more than a surmise!* Of course, it is not! It is something that Herr Bernstein got to understand only when he decided to deny materialism, while nobody with any understanding of the matter has passed that "this" off for something else.

But what *follows* from that "this" being a simple surmise? Is it that materialism is a hollow doctrine? That is the question, to which there is no "*atom*" of reply either in Herr Bernstein's former "critical" exercises or in the book under review.

Further: "An article in which I indicated this circumstance and remarked that pure materialism is ultimately idealism has pro-

vided Mr. Plekhanov with the desired pretext to attack me in *Neue Zeit* (Issue 44, 16th year, II¹⁷⁶), accusing me of ignorance in general, and, in particular, of a complete absence of any understanding of Engels's philosophical views. I say nothing of Mr. Plekhanov's having arbitrarily made my words refer to things I did not touch upon; I state only that his article ends with a statement to the effect that Engels, in replying to a question from Mr. Plekhanov: 'So do you think old Spinoza was right when he said that thought and extent are nothing but two attributes of one and the same substance?' said, 'Of course, old Spinoza was quite right.'"

The author of these lines was indeed greatly surprised when he saw how poorly Engels's philosophy (and consequently Marx's as well), has been understood by Herr Bernstein, who spent several years in close contact with Engels. In reply to Herr Bernstein's call: "*Back to Kant*", we invited him to *return to a study of philosophy* (zurück ins Studierzimmer). We did not seek any pretext for an attack on Herr Bernstein. If our surprise found expression in a certain sharpness, that acerbity can be explained by our former relations with Herr Bernstein. Though to us he always seemed to be *narrow-minded* (this can be borne out by many of our closest comrades), we yet considered him a member of Marx's school, and were amazed by the truly puerile *trifles* he had written about materialism. At the time, our sharply-worded opinion of him might have been found somewhat unjust by some readers, but today scarcely anyone with some claim to knowledge will be found who will make so bold as to reproach us of exaggeration. *Herr Bernstein's philosophical ignorance has now revealed itself in all its lustre*, so that we shall not even invite him to return to his schoolbooks: *we can see that schoolbooks have not been written for such as he is*.

Pure materialism is ultimately idealism! But in that case, is the philosophy of Fichte and Hegel "ultimately" the philosophy of La Mettrie or Holbach?! This can be asserted only by one who has no understanding of materialism, idealism, Holbach, La Mettrie, Hegel or Fichte. Idealism undoubtedly has a common feature with materialism: a striving towards a *monist* explanation of phenomena. However, the *mode* in which this striving is given effect to in *materialism* is the *diametrical opposite* of the mode in which it is effected to in *idealism*, which is why materialism "ultimately" *diverges radically* from idealism.

In his call "*back to Kant*", Herr Bernstein ought to have shown that the road being followed by materialism is wrong in one respect or another. Instead of that, he has limited himself to a "reduction" (and what clumsy and naive reduction!) of materialism to idealism. What amazing force and profundity of criticism!

And now about Spinoza. Mme. Kantsel has made a poor translation of the relevant passage in Herr Bernstein's book. Herr Bernstein says that our article, written on his "return to Kant" (whom he has never known, as is acknowledged even by his fellow-thinker Mr. Struve), is *reducible* to my conversation with Engels, which he has quoted. That is not true.

A German comrade, who is far more competent in matters of philosophy than Herr Bernstein is, has expressed, in *Neue Zeit*, the thought that materialism as grounded in natural science does not stand up to criticism, and should not be linked with the theory of Marx and Engels, which can be very easily linked with the far more valid philosophical system of *Spinoza*. Since Herr Bernstein has incidentally referred to the article by this comrade, we have found it necessary to reply to it as well. We have shown that Marx and Engels never adhered to the materialism which the Spinozist comrade has called that of natural science, i.e., the materialism of Vogt and Moleschott. Further, on the basis of the works of La Mettrie and Diderot, we have shown that French eighteenth-century materialism was in essence *nothing more than a modification of Spinozism*. We have shown the same in respect of *Feuerbach* as well. It was only *after that*, when we went over to Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, that we, in noting the close affinity between their philosophical views and those of Feuerbach, voiced our conviction that their materialism was also a variety of Spinozism. Finally, as *one of the grounds* for that conviction, we referred to one of our conversations with Engels. With Herr Bernstein, it appears that our article, *in its entirety*, can be reduced to that conversation. What should these words be ascribed to: a lack of truthfulness or of understanding?

"With Spinoza," Herr Bernstein continues, "God is the substance he ascribes these two attributes to. At all events, Spinoza identifies God with Nature, which is why Spinoza has long been denounced as a denier of God, while his philosophy has been rejected as atheistic whereas, formally speaking, it is a kind of pantheism.... Spinoza arrived at the notion of 'God' as infinite substance with attributes already mentioned, as well as others, this in a purely speculative way; for him, law-governed thinking and being were identical. In this respect, he resembled certain materialists but it would be an arbitrary understanding of the word to call him a representative of philosophical materialism.... If by the word 'materialism' one is in general to understand something definite, then it can be only the doctrine of matter as the ultimate and sole foundation of things. But Spinoza expressly characterised his substance 'God' as non-corporeal.... Anyone is, of course, free to be a Spinozist; only, in that case, he will no longer be a materialist."

This is all that Herr Bernstein has been able to say in reply to our historical note. It is not much. However, to this little one can apply, in a certain sense, the Latin expression *non multa, sed multum*.

Spinoza resembles some materialists in his seeing law-governed thinking and being as identical. Very good. Consequently there exist materialists who acknowledge the identity of being and thinking. It appears that they do. But that is balderdash, and if Herr Bernstein *understood* the actual meaning of the words: *the identity of being and thinking*, he would of course never have discovered that identity in any single materialist. He would have seen that *recognition of the identity of being and thinking is possible only in idealism*. And then—a new and also very considerable advantage of an understanding of the subject—he would not have said that pure materialism is ultimately idealism. However, he does not understand what he is speaking of and is therefore as clumsy and helpless in his use of philosophical terminology, as the “magician” (in Gleb Uspensky’s story *Songs of Need*) was clumsy and helpless in his use of the literary language, when he promised to display to the ladies and gentlemen in the audience “the decapitation of the head, nose and other parts of the body”.

If Spinoza had recognised the identity of being and thinking, he would have been a “pure” idealist, i.e., something he never was. His single substance is *simultaneously both material and spiritual*.^{*} In Bernstein’s words, however, Spinoza “*expressly characterised*” it as non-corporeal. How well he has understood Spinoza! Almost as well as he has understood Hegel!

All these blunders of Herr Bernstein’s are most obvious and most unpardonable; they testify to such total and absolute incompetence in the field of philosophy that the reader may well ask whether it is worthwhile dwelling on them? However, anyone who would be prone even for a minute to give a *negative* reply to that question would be making a big mistake.

IV

Overjoyed at Herr Bernstein’s apostasy, the bourgeoisie are now lauding this “critic” to the skies; his exploits as “critic” have been proclaimed with such pomp from the housetops that a careful analysis of his arguments can provide numerous and highly interesting psychological “documents” to characterise our times. Besides, Herr Bernstein’s renunciation of materialism and his

^{*} Cf. *Die Ethik von Spinoza*, neu übersetzt von J. Stern, II. Th., S. 77 und 80.

striving to "return to Kant"* are not simple errors of a philosophical mind (if one could only speak of Herr Bernstein's philosophical mind); no, they have been a natural, inevitable and vivid expression of his present-day socio-political leanings, which can be expressed in the words: a *rapprochement with the advanced sections of the bourgeoisie*. "What is called the middle class," he says, "is a complex class consisting of various sections with very heterogeneous and dissimilar interests. These sections hold together as long as they are equally oppressed or as long as they are equally threatened. In this particular case we can of course speak only of the latter, i.e., that the bourgeoisie form a homogeneous reactionary mass because all their elements are equally threatened by the Social-Democrats—some in their material interests and others in their ideological interests, i.e., their religion, their patriotism, and their desire to save the country from the horrors of violent revolution" (pp. 248-49). This short quotation provides a key to an understanding of the psychology in the "revision" of Marxism undertaken by Herr Bernstein. To avoid a "threat" to the ideological interests of the bourgeoisie—and first and foremost to its *religion*—Herr Bernstein has "returned" to the viewpoint of "critical" philosophy, which gets along very well with religion, while *materialism* is utterly and irreconcilably *hostile* to it.** To avoid a "threat" to bourgeois "*patriotism*", he has set about refuting Marx's proposition that the proletariat has no homeland, and speaking on German foreign policy in the tone of a "statesman" of the "Realpolitik" school; finally, to avoid the "threat" of the "*horrors of violent revolution*" to the bourgeoisie, he has risen up against the "Zusammenbruchstheorie" (which, incidentally, he himself fabricated out of some words of Marx and Engels which he had partly misunderstood and partly distorted) and attempted to prove that "class dictatorship is a sign of a lower culture... a step backwards, political atavism". Anyone who wishes to understand Herr Bernstein should try to understand, not so much his theoretical arguments, which contain nothing but ignorance and muddled thinking, as his practical aspirations, which account for all his mishaps

* In his book he says incidentally that for the expression "return to Kant" he has now substituted the expression "Let us return to Lange". But that does not change anything.

**]Even the ancients realised that herein lay one of the great services rendered to culture by materialism. Lucretius expressed this awareness excellently in his extolment of Epicurus. "When the life of man lay ... grovelling upon the earth crushed by the weight of religion which showed her face from the realms of heaven, lowering upon mortals with dreadful mien, 'twas a man of Greece who dared first to raise his mortal eyes to meet her, and first to stand forth to meet her: him neither the stories of the gods nor thunderbolts checked, nor the sky with its revengeful roar...."

in the realm of theory and his backsliding. *What a man is, such is his philosophy*, Fichte said with much justice.

(Religion "is the opium of the people," Marx wrote in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.¹⁷⁷ "To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real happiness*.... The criticism of religion is therefore ... the criticism of the vale of tears."¹⁷⁸

This kind of language could not, of course, be to the liking either of the bourgeois philistines, who stand in need of the "opium" of religion to ensure for themselves a little of *illusory happiness*, or of those far more gifted and bold ideologists of the bourgeoisie who, after shedding their own religious prejudices, yet regale the masses of the people with *illusory happiness* exclusively to protect from those masses the *real happiness* of the well-endowed classes. It goes without saying that these are gentlemen that have risen up so violently against materialism and so loudly condemn the "dogmatism" of those revolutionaries who unmask the actual nature of their anti-materialist propaganda....)

In an interesting booklet entitled *Reform oder Revolution*, C. von Massow, Geheimer Regierungsrath, Mitglied der internationalen Kommission für Schutzpflege u.s.w., in short, a most "*estimable*" gentleman, voices his firm conviction that "if our development proceeds in the same way as it has till now, then our Fatherland will be threatened in the future by social revolution" (Vorwort, S. 1). What is needed, in his opinion, to avoid that revolution is comprehensive reform (eine Gesamtreform auf staatlichem und sozialem Gebiet), a demand his book deals with. But his programme of comprehensive reform does not preclude a struggle against the "revolutionary forces" (die Mächte des Umsturzes). Before a revolutionary explosion takes place, those forces should be fought against with the *spiritual* weapon (mit geistigen Waffen), and in that struggle the efforts should be directed, first and foremost, *against materialism*. However, Herr von Massow thinks that the struggle against materialism will be best conducted by those opponents of the "revolutionary forces" that will cleanse themselves of the taint of materialism. "The enemy we must engage in the first place is the materialism in our own midst," he preaches. "Social-Democracy is utterly materialistic; it denies God and eternity" (sic). "But who has that doctrine been borrowed from? Has it not come down from above? The vast majority of the educated people of our times have turned away from the faith of their fathers..." "Part of the educated world are quite atheistic."* And the social consequences of atheism are horrifying. "If there is neither God, life beyond the grave, nor

* op. cit., S. 222.

eternity; if the soul ceases to exist together with the advent of death, then any calamity, any poverty suffered by part of mankind, which suffers while another part enjoys surfeit, becomes two and three hundred times as unjust. Why should nine-tenths of the people bear a heavy burden of life while a minority remain free of any burden?"*

This is a question the atheist can give no satisfactory answer to. But it is therein that the *social* danger of atheism lies; it arouses and encourages revolutionary sentiments in the toiling masses. That is why our Geheimer Regierungsrath, etc., etc., preaches to the educated bourgeoisie repentance and a struggle against materialism. Herr von Massow is an intelligent man. He is far more intelligent than all those "Marxists" who, while sincerely sympathising with the working class, no less sincerely go in for "critical" philosophy. Such people adhere to a materialist understanding of history, but they are greatly surprised when they are told of the *social*, i.e., ultimately, the *economic* causes of that negative attitude towards *materialism*, and that spread of *neo-Kantianism*, which are to be seen among the educated bourgeoisie of today.

V

But let us hark back to Herr Bernstein. The concluding chapter of his book is embellished with the epigraph: "Kant wider Cant". In explaining the meaning of this epigraph, Herr Bernstein says that he has invoked the spirit of the Königsberg philosopher for a struggle against the conventionality of outmoded views which are seeking to assert themselves in Social-Democracy, and present a great danger to it. "The fits of fury I have thereby evoked in Mr. P." (Plekhanov) "have fortified me in the conviction that Social-Democracy needs a new Kant to subject the old doctrine to rigorous ethical winnowing and show wherein its ostensible materialism is the highest and therefore most easily misleading ideology, show that contempt for the ideal and elevation of the material factors to the level of omnipotent powers of development is self-deception, which has always in fact been seen as such by those who preach it" (p. 330). The reader is hard put to understand what he means by "ostensible materialism", and "self-deception"—moreover, one that is "in fact" quite *deliberate*. The explanation is quite simple: in Herr Bernstein's opinion, self-deception is unavoidable wherever there are people who consider the economic factors "omnipotent", while, at the same time, they are "in fact" capable of harbouring *ideals*. This alone is sufficient to show how *close* Herr Bernstein now stands to Mr. Kareyev, and therefore

* op cit., S. 222-23.

how *far removed* he is from any serious criticism of Marxism. For conclusive proof of that, one has only to read the pages devoted by Herr Bernstein to an assessment of the *historical* views of Marx and Engels. The reading of those pages makes one's hair literally stand on end. For lack of space, we shall not analyse them here, but shall refer the curious reader to what has been said about them by Karl Kautsky in his book *Bernstein und das sozial-demokratische Programm*, and by us in the Preface to the new edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.^{*179} We shall only note here the following oddity, which incidentally refers, not to a philosophico-historical but to a philosophical "criticism" of Marxism. Herr Bernstein says: "In the expression 'the materialist understanding of history' are contained, in advance, all the misunderstandings linked in general with the concept of materialism. Philosophical or natural-historical materialism is quite deterministic, which cannot be said of the Marxist understanding of history, which does not award the economic foundation of the life of peoples any absolutely determining influence on its forms" (pp. 23-24). This is tantamount to asserting that a determinist is one that awards to the economic foundation of life an absolutely determining influence on the *forms* of life (!). This must be the height of ignorance and ineptitude. But that is not all. Later, when Kautsky remarked in *Neue Zeit* that no scientific explanation of phenomena is possible without determinism, our "critic" hastened to declare that he had rebelled only against *materialist* determinism, which consists in an explanation of psychological phenomena by the operation of matter, while he, Herr Bernstein, also recognises the operation of another principle. Herr Bernstein has thus safely put in at the peaceful haven of *dualism*, the entrance to which bears the edifying inscription: "*Man is made up of body and soul.*" Again, this is the *Kareyev doctrine* the Russian reader is so well familiar with. But it is in poor accord even with Kantianism that Herr Bernstein wishes to "return" to. Kant asserts categorically that *alle Handlungen der vernünftigen Wesen, sofern sie Erschei-*

* A remark en passant: Herr Bernstein does not approve of our expression: the *monist* explanation of history. With him, the word *monistisch* proves synonymous with *simplistisch*. To avoid entering into lengthy explanations of why a "*monist*" explanation of history is essential, we shall say, in the words of Newton: *causas rerum naturalium non plures admitti debere, quam quae et verae sint et earum Phenomenis explicandis sufficient.* [One should not admit more causes of natural phenomena than those that are true and sufficient for their explanation.] Herr Bernstein does not understand that, while the development of social—and ultimately of economic—relations is not the radical cause of the development of the so-called *spiritual* factor, the latter develops *out of itself*, this *self-development of the spiritual factor* being nothing more than a variety of the "*self-development of ideas*" our "critic" has warned his readers against as one of the most dangerous baits in Hegelian dialectics.

nungen sind, in irgend einer Erfahrung angetroffen werden, stehen unter der Naturnothwendigkeit (all the acts of rational beings, inasmuch as they are phenomena and in one way or another are met by us in our experience, are subordinate to natural necessity) (*Prolegomena*, Paragraph 53). Should this be taken to mean that phenomena obey natural necessity? It means just that they are to be explained materialistically (cf. *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, Paragraph 78). It appears, consequently, that Herr Bernstein has rebelled, not only against the materialists but *also against Kant*, and with the sole purpose of avoiding any *threat to the bourgeoisie's ideological interests*, i.e., to avoid attacking bourgeois cant. Cant wider Kant—such is the motto Herr Bernstein should choose.

If Herr Bernstein has rejected *materialism* so as to avoid "threatening" one of the "ideological interests" of the bourgeoisie known as *religion*, his rejection of *dialectics* has resulted from his non-desire to frighten the selfsame bourgeoisie with the "*horrors of violent revolution*". We said above that he was himself probably not unwilling to condemn the "*abstract either ... or*", which takes no account of conditions of place and time, which is why he himself unconsciously uses the dialectical method. That is true enough, but it should now be added that he unconsciously takes up a concretely dialectical stand only in those cases and only in the measure in which dialectics is a *convenient weapon in the struggle against the imaginary radicalism of "revolutionaries" whose thinking follows the "yes is yes, no is no" formula*. These are the cases when any philistine turns into a *dialectician*. But that selfsame Herr Bernstein is prepared—together with all philistines the world over—to utter any kind of balderdash against dialectics and level the most absurd accusations against it whenever he thinks it can help strengthen and develop revolutionary aspirations in the area of socialism. Marx says that in the good old times dialectics became the fashion with the German philistines when they knew it only in its mystified form and imagined that it could serve to justify their conservative aspirations, but they turned against it when they learnt its real nature and realised that it considers everything that exists in terms of its transience, that it stops at nothing and fears nothing, in short, that it *is revolutionary in its essence*.¹⁸⁰ This same attitude towards dialectics is to be seen in Herr Bernstein, all of whose psychology reveals him as an offspring of German philistinism. That is why his "criticism" has been welcomed by the German philistines with loud and long outcries of joy, and why they have numbered him among the great. Birds of a feather....

So as not to "threaten" the bourgeoisie with the "*horrors of violent revolution*", Herr Bernstein has rebelled against dialectics and risen up in arms against the Zusammenbruchstheorie which

he himself has invented. At the same time and with the same aim in view, he is acting as a Pindar of *democracy*. "Democracy," he says, "is, in principle, the destruction of class domination if not the actual destruction of classes themselves" (p. 225). We are well aware of all the advantages of democracy and of all the benefits it gives the working class in its struggle for liberation. However, we do not wish to distort the truth even for the sake of democracy, in just the same way as we do not wish to indulge in unseemly exaggeration. That democracy destroys class domination is nothing more than an invention of Herr Bernstein's. Democracy allows that domination to exist in an area to which the notion of class, properly speaking, belongs, i.e., *the sphere of the economy*. It abolishes only the *political privileges* of the upper classes. It is for that reason that it does not destroy the *economic* supremacy of one class over another—the bourgeoisie over the proletariat—it does not eliminate either the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie or the need for the proletariat to wage that struggle employing all the means that may prove *fitting* at a given time. In reasonable terms, any man in his right mind will agree that the "horrors of violent revolution", *taken by themselves*, contain nothing that is *desirable*, but any man who has not been blinded by anti-revolutionary trends must also acknowledge that a democratic constitution does not preclude an exacerbation of the class struggle that can make a revolutionary explosion and a revolutionary dictatorship inevitable. Herr Bernstein had no grounds to frighten revolutionaries with the consideration that class dictatorship would be a sign of a lower level of culture. The great social question of our times—that of the abolition of the economic exploitation of man by man (can be solved—in just the same way as all great social questions of former times—*only by force*. True, *force does not yet mean violence; violence is only one of the forms of the manifestation of force*. However, the choice of the form in which the proletariat will have to display its revolutionary strength *depends, not on its good will but on the circumstances*. That form is better which leads to victory over the enemy more speedily and assuredly. If a "*violent revolution*" has proved the most suitable mode of action in a given country and in given circumstances then that man will prove a miserable doctrinaire—if not a traitor—who will bring to bear against it principled considerations like those we meet in Herr Bernstein's writings: "a low level of culture", "political atavism" and so on. Hand-to-hand fighting) is, if you wish, a zoological "atavism" wherever it takes place: two men locked in struggle remind one of two fighting beasts. But who, except the "Tolstoyans", will in principle condemn any resistance to evil by means of hand-to-hand fighting? And will any serious man be found who will take in earnest the arguments with

the aid of which the Tolstoyans condemn violence in principle? To any thinking man it is obvious that such arguments are an unintended caricature of thinking in accordance with the "*yes is yes, and no is no*" formula so beloved of Herr Bernstein, which, as we know, is quite identical to the Hegelian "*abstract either... or*" (violence is *either* evil *or* good). The "horrors of violent revolution" are always more or less "horrible". That is so and nobody will question it. However, Herr Bernstein has chosen a very bad way of evading those horrors: he should address himself to the bourgeoisie and show those of its elements who have not yet sunk into the morass of class selfishness that trying to slow down the socialist movement of today means committing a heinous sin against humaneness and culture. In the measure of success attending his preachment, it would weaken the resistance offered by the bourgeoisie to the proletarian movement and thereby lessen the possibility of the "horrors of violent revolution". Herr Bernstein has preferred to act differently. He has set about befogging the class consciousness of the workers by coming out with a preaching of a Marxism which he has "revised" with the special purpose of soothing the bourgeoisie. This device has proved effective in the sense that a considerable part of the educated bourgeoisie has very well realised all the *advantage to it* of the spread of a Marxism "revised" by Herr Bernstein at the expense of the old and revolutionary theory of Marx. This part of the bourgeoisie has greeted Herr Bernstein as a kind of Messiah. However, he is dead as far as socialism is concerned, and, of course, will never rise from the dead, no matter how loud his outcries that the socialists have failed to understand him and that, in essence, he has changed very little in comparison with what he previously was. Surely, an excess of zeal that gets one nowhere!

VI

At every step Herr Bernstein loses his bearings in the vagueness of his ideas and is entangled in his own contradictions. Nevertheless, his arguments contain a logical nub about which all his thoughts group themselves. That nub is the *incomes doctrine*.

"It is quite wrong to think," he says, "that present-day development shows a relative or even absolute decrease in the number of property-owners. Their number is growing, not 'more or less' but simply more, i.e., is growing absolutely and relatively. If the activities and prospects of Social-Democracy depended on a decrease in the number of property-owners, then it could indeed sleep soundly. But that is not the case. It is not with a decrease but with an increase in social wealth that the prospects of Social-Democracy are linked" (p. 90).

Neither Marx, Engels nor any of their followers ever linked their hopes with a *decrease* in social wealth. In his attempts to break *such* a "link", Herr Bernstein is simply battling against windmills. However, all Marxists have been convinced that the growth of social wealth in capitalist society goes hand in hand with the *growth of social inequality and a decline in the number of property-owners*. Had Herr Bernstein been able to prove the reverse, it would have to be acknowledged that he had dealt Marxism a mortal blow. (And then, indeed, all talk of the social revolution would be useless.) The trouble is that Herr Bernstein has proved absolutely nothing except his own lack of understanding. The arguments he adduces in defence of his bold statements boil down in practice to the thesis that moderate incomes grow more rapidly than the population does. This is an indisputable fact but it proves absolutely nothing. *If social income grows more rapidly than the number of moderate incomes does, then the growth of that number is fully compatible with the growth of social inequality*. We have proved that in an article against Mr. P. Struve specially dealing with the question of the "dulling" of socio-economic inequality.¹⁸¹ We shall refer the reader to that article, limiting ourselves here to some specific remarks.

In the first place, the growth in the number of moderate incomes, which is quite compatible with the growth of socio-economic inequality, in no way testifies either to the absolute, and still less to the relative increase in the number of property-owners. *Property and income* are two quite distinct notions.

In the second place, Herr Bernstein's references to the distribution of landed property are just as *inaccurate* as his mention of the growth in the number of moderate incomes lacks conviction. Here is one of the many examples available.

He says that the group of medium-size peasant farms in Germany grew by almost 8 per cent in the period between 1882 and 1895, while their area went up by 9 per cent (p. 110). But what sense do figures on the growth in the absolute number of farms of the area of a *single* category of farms make if we are not told the *total* number of farms in the country and the *total* area under cultivation? If we take into account this circumstance, i.e., if we consider the *share* of medium-size peasant farms in the aggregate number of farms and the aggregate area, we shall find that the area occupied in Germany by farms in this category showed a quite negligible increase. In 1882 it formed 11.9 per cent of the entire land area, rising to 12.37 per cent in 1895, an increase of *less than one-half per cent*. But we say this about the *entire* land area in Germany. As for the agricultural area proper, farms in the category mentioned accounted for 12.26 per cent in 1882, and

13.02 per cent in 1895, a growth of not more than 0.75 per cent.* This growth was so insignificant that the use of the word *growth* is somewhat strange.

So complex is the state of affairs in German agriculture that it cannot be discussed in terms of bare statistics alone, but calls for a consideration of the geographical features of each locality, as well as the technical and economic features of each particular category of farms, and also the *changes* in those features in the periods under review.

As for *Britain*, Herr Bernstein has forgotten to add, or does not know, that the small farmers, who have indeed increased in number in some areas, this under the influence of overseas competition, go by the name of "*British slaves*",** so poor is their economic condition.

Marx's theory is just as little disproved by the growth in the number of such "slaves" as it would be by the increase of the sweating system*** in any branch of the manufacturing industry.

In the East of the *United States*, Herr Bernstein says, the number of small and medium-size farms is growing. Again this is untrue. In the Eastern States the number of small farms is *falling*, and in general, according to Levasseur, a certain *trend towards concentration* is to be seen in North America.****

The most recent statistics also reveal a concentration of landed property in *Belgium*,***** where a *relative decrease in the number of owners of land* is an established fact.

VII

"Herr Schulze-Gävernitz's one-sided presentation of the history of modern British development, against which I came out very sharply in the past, has not prevented him, either in his *Zum sozialen Frieden* or in his monograph *Der Grossbetrieb—ein wirtschaftlicher Fortschritt*, from establishing facts of great importance for an understanding of the economic significance of our times," says Herr Bernstein. "I see nothing bad in that, and willingly admit

* See "Die Landwirtschaft im Deutschen Reich. Nach der landwirthschaftlichen Betriebszählung vom 14. Juni 1895, *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*. Neue Folge, Band 112, S. 11.

** See *Final Report of H. M. Commissioners appointed to inquire into the subject of agricultural depression*, London, 1879, p. 36. [The two words in quotes are in English in the original.]

*** [These two words are in English in the original.]

**** *L'agriculture aux Etats Unis, Paris et Nancy*, 1894, pp. 61-62. The latest North American census showed that concentration is manifesting itself in that country in agriculture as well.

***** See the book by Vandervelde *La propriété foncière en Belgique*, as well as our note on it in *Zarya*, Issue I.

that I have noted many facts quoted by Schulze-Gävernitz as well as by other economists of the Brentano school (Herkner and Sinzheimer), facts I had not previously noticed or had underestimated. I am not even ashamed to admit that I have learnt something from J. Wolf's book *Sozialismus und kapitalistische Gesellschaftsordnung*. Herr Plekhanov calls this an eclectic blending (of scientific socialism) with the doctrine of bourgeois economists. As though nine-tenths of the elements of scientific socialism have not been taken from the works of 'bourgeois economists', and as though, in general, there exists such a thing as 'partisan science' (pp. 306 and 307).

Strictly speaking, "*partisan science*" is impossible, but, regretably enough, the existence is highly possible of "*scientists*" who are imbued with the spirit of parties and with class selfishness. When Marxists speak of bourgeois science with contempt, it is "scientists" of that brand that they have in view. It is to such "scientists" that the gentlemen Herr Bernstein has "learnt" so much from belong, viz. J. Wolf, Schulze-Gävernitz, and many others. Even if nine-tenths of scientific socialism has been taken from the writings of bourgeois economists, it has not been taken in the way in which Herr Bernstein has borrowed from the Brentanoists and other apologists of capitalism the material he uses to "revise" Marxism. Marx and Engels were able to take a *critical* attitude towards bourgeois scientists, something that Herr Bernstein has been unable or unwilling to do. When he "learns" from them, he simply places himself under their influence and, without noticing the fact, adopts their apologetics. He imagines that the doctrine of the growth of moderate incomes as proof of the absolute and relative rise in the number of property-owners is a serious advance in objective science, whereas it is actually an apologetical fabrication. Were Herr Bernstein capable of scientific thinking, he would not have barked up the wrong tree, as he has done, but then he would not have written his book.

As far back as the autumn of 1898, we voiced the thought that Herr Bernstein had set about "criticising" Marx solely because of his inability to treat bourgeois apologetics critically.* We also noted at the time the curious fact that even Herr Bernstein's much-talked-of expression, "*the movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing*", had been borrowed by him from Schulze-Gävernitz. Incapable to advance any objections to us on fundamentals, Herr Bernstein has had recourse to abusive language, to which we find

* In the article "Wofür sollen wir ihm dankbar sein", *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Nos. 253-255. We have not yet been able to understand, incidentally, why, at the Stuttgart Parteitag, Kautsky had to express thanks to Bernstein. Kautsky's book *Bernstein und das sozial-demokratische Programm* has fully borne out our opinion that there is nothing to thank him for.

no reason to react.* We set high value on Herr Bernstein's hostility to us, and are proud to have been among the first to *draw attention* to his apostasy, and *brand* it. "*It is a question of who will bury whom,*" we wrote in the article in question, "*whether Bernstein will bury Social-Democracy, or Social-Democracy will bury Bernstein.*" This posing of the question seemed too harsh to many of our comrades in 1898, but that is exactly how the matter is now seen by *all* in the ranks of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The ensuing course of events fully confirmed the justice of our words. We had not the slightest wish in the past to engage in any altercation with Herr Bernstein and we have no wish to do that today either, but we cannot withstand the temptation to note the following interesting detail.

Herr Bernstein has interpreted the remarks we directed against him in the sense that we consider the worker's condition in capitalist society "hopeless"; he has declared that he does not wish to enter into argument "with a person according to whose concepts science demands that the worker's condition should be considered hopeless in all circumstances, right up to the great upheaval" (pp. 309-10). What severity of epithet! However, we come across the following passage in the severe Bernstein's book:

In the doctrine of Marx and Engels, "only the following remains unrefuted: that the productive capacity in present-day society is far greater than the actual demand for products as determined by purchasing power; that millions are living in squalid dwellings, are poorly clad and undernourished despite the abundance of means to provide them with sufficient housing, food and clothing; that overproduction is a consequence of this disproportion in various branches of industry...; that there consequently exists consid-

* Our opponent's abusive language has gone hand in hand with dishonest methods of debate. For instance, Herr Bernstein is out to prove that it is impossible as yet to abolish classes, with which purpose he quotes Engels as having allegedly said that the abolition of classes will be possible "only at a certain and very high stage, relatively to our times, in the development of the productive forces" (pp. 325-26). What emerges is that, according to Engels, the level we have reached in the development of the productive forces is still insufficient for the abolition of capitalism. In actual fact, Engels says *quite the reverse*: "Sie" (die Abschaffung der Klassen) "hat also zur Voraussetzung einen Höhegrad der Entwicklung der Produktion, auf dem Aneignung der Produktionsmittel und Produkte ... durch eine besondere Gesellschaftsklasse nicht nur überflüssig, sondern auch ökonomisch, politisch und intellektuell ein Hindernis der Entwicklung geworden ist. *Dieser Punkt ist erreicht...*" (italics are ours). (*Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*, dritte Auflage, S. 304, XXV.¹⁸²) [It (the abolition of classes) therefore presupposes a level of development of production at which the appropriation of the means of production and of the products ... by a particular social class has become, not merely superfluous but also—economically, politically and intellectually—an obstacle to development. *That stage has been attained....*] Herr Bernstein is surely trying too hard to avoid frightening the bourgeoisie.

erable unfairness in providing the workers with occupations, as a result of which their conditions become most precarious, subjecting them to ever more humiliating dependence because of the excess of work at one place, and unemployment at another" (pp. 145-46).

As is her wont, Mme. Kantsel has made a poor translation of Herr Bernstein, who says that the workers *are kept* in humiliating dependence, and not that they find themselves *in ever greater dependence*, as the translator has made him say. But even in this correct translation, Herr Bernstein's idea has struck back at him. Indeed, is not the condition *hopeless*, in capitalist society, of a class which, despite the amazing growth of labour productivity, *remains* in the economic condition and the humiliating dependence that we read of in Herr Bernstein's writings? It is patently *hopeless*, and obviously it is only *the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, the social revolution*, that can bring the proletariat out of that hopeless condition.* Herr Bernstein has not made a neat job of it in his new world-outlook.

Herr Bernstein asks sapiently: "Does not the vast extension of the area of the world market" (i.e., its size; we are obliged to reiterate that Mme. Kantsel has made a very poor translation of the book under review.—*G.P.*) "combined with the vast reduction of the time required for the transmission of news and the operation of transport—does it not enhance the possibility of a relaxation of depressions; and then, the steeply mounting wealth of the European industrial states, in connection with the flexibility of present-day credit and the rise of industrial cartels—has this not restricted, at least for a long time to come, the influence of local or partial depressions on the overall situation to such an extent that universal business" (i.e., industrial.—*G. P.*) "crises such as the former should be considered improbable?" (P. 126.)

The events have provided the answer to this question: since the middle of last year** the civilised world has been experiencing a general industrial crisis, whose approach was foreseen by some bourgeois businessmen *already at the time Herr Bernstein was writing his book*.

* Marx would have considered the worker's condition in capitalist society "*hopeless*" even if a considerable improvement in that condition were possible. "But just as little as better clothing, food and treatment, and a larger peculium, do away with the exploitation of the slave," he says, "so little do they set aside that of the wage-worker." (*Capital*, I, St. Petersburg, p. 534 [Russ. ed.]¹⁸³) Herr Bernstein will himself understand that the condition of the slave remains "*hopeless*", in the Marxist sense, *until slavery is abolished*. We shall note, incidentally, that we have never used the word "*hopeless*", which has merely been *ascribed* to us by Herr Bernstein. Our view concerning the position of the wage-worker in capitalist society was expressed and substantiated by us in our second article against Mr. P. Struve.¹⁸⁴

** Written in 1901.

VIII

In one of Shakespeare's plays, a courtier says of the demented Ophelia:

*...Speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection....*

The same has to be said of Herr Bernstein's book: it carries half sense; its speech is nothing, yet the unshaped use of it moves the attentive reader to collection. In all questions of theory, Herr Bernstein has shown himself to be as weak as weak can be. How has it come to pass that for many years he has played the part of one of the most outstanding theoreticians of his Party? This is a question that gives food for thought. It is no easy matter to find any satisfactory answer....

Another and no less important matter is that only faint traces of socialism have survived in Herr Bernstein's views. In fact, he is *far closer to the petty-bourgeois adherents of "social reform" than to revolutionary Social-Democracy*. Yet he remains a "comrade", and has not been asked to leave the Party. This can be accounted for in part by the *false view regarding freedom of opinion*, now so widespread among Social-Democrats in all countries. "How can a man be expelled from the Party because of his views?" it is said. "That would mean persecuting him for heresy." People who think thus forget that *freedom of opinion* must necessarily be supplemented with freedom to draw closer together or part company, and that the latter freedom has no existence wherever some prejudice makes people march together who would do better to part because of their difference of views. But this erroneous reasoning is only part of the explanation (why Herr Bernstein has not been expelled from the German Social-Democratic Party. The main reason is that his new views are shared by a fairly considerable number of other Social-Democrats. For reasons we cannot go into in this article, *opportunism* has won many supporters in the ranks of Social-Democracy in various countries. This spread of opportunism presents the main danger threatening it today. Social-Democrats who have remained loyal to the revolutionary spirit of their programme—and they are fortunately still in the majority almost everywhere—will be making an irreparable mistake if they do not take timely and decisive action to counter the danger.) Taken alone, Herr Bernstein, far from being formidable, is simply ridiculous and marked by a striking resemblance to the philosophising Sancho Panza. What his theory stands for, however, is a most alarming thing as a symptom of possible decline.

⟨Incidentally, Herr Bernstein has written the following: "To show Mr. Plekhanov's polemical devices in their true light, I must point out that a great if not the greater part of Russian Social-Democrats now active in Russia have decisively adopted a viewpoint close to mine, and that in that sense some of my 'empty' articles have been translated into Russian and brought out in separate editions."* This is followed by the malicious remark that such a thing can scarcely fill us with joy. Leaving aside both the question of our personal sentiments and that of how our polemical devices can be characterised by the fact of Social-Democrats active in Russia drawing closer to Herr Bernstein—if that were true—we shall note that he is evidently referring to the so-called "economic" trend in Russian Social-Democracy.¹⁸⁵ It is common knowledge that this trend, which met with some temporary success in Russia, has now been overcome by our fellow-thinkers, who see in Herr Bernstein nothing more than a *renegade*. But it is not yet generally known that there has been a Russian Social-Democratic publication (issued abroad) which has failed to notice the existence of the "economic" trend, and has therefore denied it. Its editors must surely be people of keen vision.¹⁸⁶⟩

This wretched translation of Herr Bernstein's wretched little book has appeared in two "legal" editions, with a third one in the offing. There is nothing surprising about that. *Any* "criticism" of Marxism and *any* parody of it—if only imbued with the *bourgeois* spirit—is sure to be to the liking of that section of our legal Marxists which is itself a *bourgeois parody of Marxism*.

August 1901.

* This passage is omitted in Mme. Kantsel's translation. It is to be found in the footnote on page 112 of the Russian translation of Herr Bernstein's book, which was published in London.

CONRAD SCHMIDT VERSUS KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

The reader is aware that Eduard Bernstein is returning to Kant "bis zu einem gewissen Grad", and that this return has, "up to a certain point", been due to the influence of Conrad Schmidt. What are the latter's philosophical views?

He has set them forth: 1) in an article entitled "Ein neues Buch über die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung" and published in the Berlin *Akademiker*, 1896 (July and August),* and 2) in an article dealing with a book by Kronenberg, *Kant, sein Leben und seine Lehre*. The latter article was published in the third supplement to the Berlin newspaper *Vorwärts* of October 17, 1897.

I propose here to deal with these two articles.

If we are to believe Conrad Schmidt, Marx and Engels declared "theoretico-cognitive idealism" disproved at a time when it still called for refutation. The term theoretico-cognitive idealism should be taken to mean Kant's idealism; that is self-evident, and Conrad Schmidt has categorically said so. "It is not Hegel's dialectico-evolutionist ... metaphysics but Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* that is representative of idealism," he says.

In fact, Marx and Engels were opponents of the Kantian doctrine, and for the following reason.

In his outstanding work *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels says that Kant's doctrine of the unknowability of things-in-themselves was rejected already by Hegel, and following the latter though with less profundity, by Feuerbach. He goes on to say: "The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice, namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and

* (In this article Conrad Schmidt criticises my book, *Essays on the History of Materialism*. I find this criticism very feeble but I do not consider it necessary to reply to it here. What interests me at present is his objections to the materialism of Marx and Engels, and his interpretation of Kant).

making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable 'thing-in-itself'."¹⁸⁷

Criticising *agnosticism* in the Introduction to the English translation of his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels argues in the same way:

"Again," he says there, "our agnostic admits that all our knowledge is based upon the information imparted to us by our senses. But, he adds, how do we know that our senses give us correct representations of the objects we perceive through them? And he proceeds to inform us that, whenever he speaks of objects or their qualities, he does not in reality mean these objects and qualities, of which he cannot know anything for certain, but merely the impressions which they have produced on his senses. Now, this line of reasoning seems undoubtedly hard to beat by mere argumentation. But before there was argumentation there was action. 'Im Anfang war die Tat.' And human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense-perceptions. If these perceptions have been wrong, then our estimate of the use to which an object can be turned must also be wrong, and our attempt must fail. But if we succeed in accomplishing our aim, if we find that the object does agree with our idea of it, and does answer the purpose we intended it for, then that is positive proof that our perceptions of it and of its qualities, so far, agree with reality outside ourselves."¹⁸⁸

Thus, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating". Such is the main argument directed by Engels against Kant's doctrine, and against agnosticism (in general).

In essence, Marx adhered to the same line of argument when, in 1845, he wrote in the second thesis on Feuerbach: "The question whether objective (gegenständliche) truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness (Diesseitigkeit) of his thinking."¹⁸⁹

Herr Conrad Schmidt, however, considers this line of argument most feeble.

"It is the same," he writes, "as though we said that the fact that we find nexus and conformity with law in external Nature and, thanks to that, we can exert a purposeful influence on Nature—this fact proves with the utmost clarity that our knowledge of Nature is a cognition of what exists in reality; there is absolutely no need for us to scientifically analyse and reject the doubts raised on that score by idealism; we can simply dismiss them as hollow sophistries."

Elsewhere, he expresses himself as follows: "Neither Feuerbach nor Marx and Engels, who experienced his influence, entered into an examination of the fundamental question, and did not take the bull by the horns."

Doctor Conrad Schmidt could say so for the sole reason that he himself has failed to understand wherein lies the fundamental question of *Kantian* idealism, i.e., for the sole reason that he himself has been unable to take the bull by the horns.

I shall try to explain the matter to him in the simplest of terms.

What is a phenomenon? *It is a condition of our consciousness evoked by the effect on us of things-in-themselves.* That is what Kant says. From this definition it follows that anticipating a given phenomenon means anticipating the effect that a thing-in-itself will have on our consciousness. It may now be asked whether we can anticipate certain phenomena. The answer is: of course, we can. This is guaranteed by our *science* and our *technology*. This, however, can only mean that we can anticipate the effect that the things named will have on us. If we can anticipate the effect exerted on us by things-in-themselves, then that means that we are aware (at least) of *some of their properties*. So if we are aware of some properties of things-in-themselves, we have no right to call those things *unknowable*. This "*sophistry*" of Kant's falls to the ground, shattered by the logic of his own doctrine. That is what Engels meant by his "pudding".

His proof is as clear and irrefutable as that of a mathematical theorem. Marx and Engels's theoretical stand is impregnable,* but Doctor Schmidt does not even attempt to gainsay it, confining himself to the remark that to take up such a stand means, not disproving idealism but evading any consideration of the matter. I will leave it to the reader to judge who is "*evading*" any consideration of the issue: Marx and Engels, or Herr Conrad Schmidt.

I may be asked exactly where Kant said that a phenomenon is a product of the effect on us of things-in-themselves. The answer is provided by the following passage from *Prolegomena*:

"Idealism consists in the affirmation that there exist no other beings but such that think; accordingly the other things we think we perceive would be merely representations in thinking beings, representations that no objects outside of those beings would correspond to. On the contrary, I assert that things are given to us as external objects of our senses; however, we know nothing of what those things can be in themselves; we are aware only of

* I do not intend thereby to say that Marx and Engels were the first to advance this proof against Kant. In fact, it can be found already in Jacobi. That, however, is of no significance to me here. I wish merely to show that Marx and Engels criticised Kantianism, and did not "*evade consideration of it*", as claimed by Doctor Schmidt, (who has grasped none of their arguments).

phenomena, i.e., the representations that they evoke in us by affecting our senses. Consequently I recognise, in any case, that there exist outside of us bodies, i.e., things that are wholly unknown to us by themselves, but which we know from the representations evoked in us by their effect on our senses, and which we denote by the word 'body', a word which consequently refers only to the appearance of that object which is unknown to us but yet actually exists. Can this be called idealism? It is its direct opposite."*

There can be no doubt in respect of what Kant has said here; as long as it remains impossible, the objections will also remain irrefutable, which were raised by Marx and Engels to the alleged unknowability of things-in-themselves. To know these things through the medium of the representations they evoke in us means cognising them. The "dogmatic" materialists have never claimed that there exist any other means of cognising things-in-themselves except their effect on our senses. We have shown that sufficiently in our article "Bernstein and Materialism". It would be useless to repeat the passages quoted in the article, but another two brief statements by two well-known materialists might be cited here:

"Whatever the effect on us of a given body," says Holbach, "we get to know it only thanks to the changes it brings about in us."

In La Mettrie's *Abrégé des Systèmes*, we come across some interesting remarks to the effect that we can know only some "*absolutely relative*" properties of "external" things; most of our sensations and representations are so dependent on our organs that they at once change, following changes taking place in the latter.

It should be remembered that "to cognise" has no other meaning in general. To recognise a given thing means recognising its properties. What is meant by a property of a thing? It means the way in which it affects us *directly or indirectly*.**

To say that things-in-themselves are unknowable to us and that we know only the impressions they produce in us means saying that if we disregard the effect that things-in-themselves have on us, we shall be unable to see how they could affect us. If the eighteenth-century materialists said that we know only the outside, the "shell" of things, they were saying, in essence, exactly what I have expressed in the preceding sentence. But that is an

* *Prolegomena*, herausgeg ben von J. H. von Kirchman, Heidelberg, 1882, S. 39-40.

** "It is impossible to know more of matter than can be inferred from the phenomena in which it is concerned." (Dr. Priestley, *A Free Discussion on the Doctrine of Materialism*, London, 1778, p. 20.) "A definition of any particular thing, substance, or being (call it what you will) cannot be anything more than an enumeration of its known properties. . . If we take away all the known properties, nothing will be left, of which we can possibly have any idea at all...." (ibid., pp. 45-46).

erroneous idea, and the materialists who expressed it were in fact, albeit unwittingly, betraying their own theory of knowledge. Goethe put it far better when he said:

*Nichts ist innen, Nichts ist draussen,
Denn was innen, das ist aussen!**¹⁹⁰

This is a truly materialistic view of the subject we are dealing with.

Further: Kant admits that things-in-themselves affect us. Affecting an object means having a certain relationship with that object. Consequently, if we know—at least in part—how things affect us, then we also know—at least in part—the relations existing between us and them. But if we know what those relations are, then we are also aware—*this through the agency of our perceptions—of the relations existing between things-in-themselves as such*. This, of course, is not “immediate” knowledge, but yet it is knowledge and if we possess it, we have not the least right to assert that the relations existing between things-in-themselves are beyond the reach of our cognition.

Things(-in-themselves) affect our external senses and evoke certain sensations in us: that is what Kant says. But it means that things *cause* sensations in us. But the selfsame Kant says that the *category of causality*, like all other categories, cannot be applied to things-in-themselves. In this, he is manifestly contradicting himself.

He contradicts himself just as flatly in the question of *time*.

Things-in-themselves can affect us evidently only in terms of time, yet Kant considers time merely a subjective form of our contemplation.

Kant's doctrine also contains other contradictions, which we shall not deal with here. What we have said above is sufficient evidence that this doctrine will remain contradictory as long as we continue to hold, in full accordance with what Kant himself says in his *Prolegomena*, that things-in-themselves are the *cause* of our sensations.

Some adherents of Kantianism have noticed this contradiction, and tried to remove it. Thus, for instance, Doctor Lasswitz says the following in his book *Die Lehre Kants von der Idealität des Raumes und der Zeit*, Berlin, 1883: “It is quite true that neither time nor causality exists for things-in-themselves; this was shown by Kant. But who has affirmed that things-in-themselves are the cause of our sensations?” (We have seen that Kant himself asserted this.—G.P.). “This erroneous interpretation of Kant's doctrine is often to be met even with the philosophers. It is constantly

* [Nothing is within, nothing is without, for what is within, is without.]

being reiterated that things-in-themselves, in affecting our consciousness, cause sensations in us, yet it is clear that a noumenon, as the opposite of what actually exists, simply cannot produce any effect at all. Things-in-themselves can be anything in the world—that is a matter of supreme indifference to our experience. Experience arises through the interaction between reason and sensibility, while a thing-in-itself is always nothing more than a vague reflection, in our understanding, regarding its own limits; that thing exerts just as little influence on the nature of our experience as my reflection in a mirror affects the movements of my body.”

To save Kantianism, Herr Lasswitz comes into flagrant contradiction with Kant himself by declaring non-existent and impossible an unambiguous statement from the latter. A strange device! How could Herr Lasswitz have resorted to it?

He could do that only because, while contradicting Kant, he was at the same time able to base himself on the latter.

We have already said that Kant contradicts himself quite frequently. Here, for instance, is what we read in his *Critique of Pure Reason*:

“Understanding accordingly limits ... sensibility, without at the same time enlarging its own field. While, moreover, it forbids sensibility to apply its forms and modes to things-in-themselves and restricts it to the sphere of phenomena, it cogitates an object in itself, only, however, as a transcendental object, which is the cause of a phenomenon (consequently not itself a phenomenon), and which cannot be thought either as a quantity or as reality, or as substance (because these notions always require sensuous forms in which to determine an object)—an object, therefore, of which we are quite unable to say whether it can be met with in ourselves or out of us.... If we wish to call this object a noumenon, because the representation of it is non-sensuous, we are at liberty to do so. But as we can apply to in none of the conceptions of our understanding, the representation is quite void for us, and is available only for the indication of the limits or our sensuous intuition.”*

A transcendental object is the cause of phenomena, yet we cannot apply to it any of our notions of understanding, that is to say, the category of *causality* is inapplicable to it too. Here we have an obvious contradiction, but we shall not go into that contradiction for the time being. What is unquestionable is (that here Kant says something almost completely opposite to) what he said in the long excerpt from the *Prolegomena* quoted

* *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, herausgegeben von Dr. Kehrbach, Reclam, Zweite Auflage, S. 258.

above. What does that mean? *Is it possible that*, in his *Prolegomena*, Kant holds a different view than in his *Critique of Pure Reason*?

The answer is both yes and no. The viewpoint of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was not always the same. In its first edition, Kant inclined to view the thing-in-itself as an *ultimate notion*, to which nothing outside of our consciousness corresponds, or—to put it more precisely—Kant was very sceptical of the existence of things outside of our consciousness. This was the point of view of *sceptical idealism*.

Reproached for this by his opponents, he replied by writing the above-quoted passage in his *Prolegomena*, and tried to revise the *second* edition of his *Critique* in the “*realistic*” sense. This will be sufficiently borne out by a reference to his Introduction to that edition and to his “*refutation of idealism*”. Nevertheless, this revision was not much of a success; the viewpoint contained in the first edition is discernible in many passages in the second edition, and even the refutation of idealism could be interpreted in a sense that is the opposite of what he said in the *Prolegomena*. It was due to this circumstance that Doctor Lasswitz could contradict Kant by appealing to Kant himself.

That is indisputable. What is also beyond question is that, despite his numerous contradictions, Kant, following the publication of his *Prolegomena*, i.e., beginning with 1783, rebelled against the idealist interpretation of his doctrine. We shall ask the reader to keep this fact in mind, in view of its great importance.

Let us now see what final results Doctor Lasswitz has arrived at in his exposition of the Kantian philosophy.

“All being,” he says, “is grouped in two kinds of being—the subjective and the objective. The two are to be found in our consciousness, and both possess an equal degree of reality and authenticity. There is no being that exists outside consciousness, but there is a being which is not our *I*, to wit, the things outside of ourselves. Such things are always arranged in our consciousness in a certain order, and it is exactly that which gives us a consciousness of the *I* against the world of external objects.”*

For the reader to get a better grasp of this viewpoint of Doctor Lasswitz's, we shall ask him to consider the following lines as well:

“Consequently, being, actual and true being, has a spiritual character; there is no other being....”

“Any being—the being of *I* and *not-I*—is a definite modification of consciousness; without consciousness there is no being....”

* *Die Lehre Kants*, S. 138.

The reader, of course, may think that we are still quoting from Lasswitz. He is mistaken. The last two excerpts come from *Fichte*.^{*} To save Kantianism, i.e., to eliminate its internal contradiction, Doctor Lasswitz has been obliged to abandon (Kant's) vacillating point of view (and go over to the viewpoint) of *subjective idealism*. His *neo-Kantianism* is merely a more or less conscious *neo-Fichteanism*.

Consequently, Doctor Lasswitz could not say, together with Doctor Conrad Schmidt, that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is representative of idealism. He would have to acknowledge that idealism is best of all represented in Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* [the theory of science]. I am speaking conventionally: *he would have to*, since I doubt that he would have the courage to do so; as is common knowledge, Kant protested against his doctrine being interpreted in the meaning of the theory of science.^{**} He would have therefore also protested against the above-quoted work by Doctor Lasswitz.

In a letter to Reinhold, Fichte called Kant "ein Dreiviertel-skopf", (three-quarters of a mind), saying that the Holy Spirit in Kant was closer to the truth than was Kant's personality. In their turn, neo-Kantians such as Lasswitz can award Kant the same kind of characteristic, and would be obliged to do so if they were consistent. Whatever they may say, they will never be able to conceal from those with some understanding of the matter that they have abandoned Kant's doctrine and have leaned towards subjective idealism.

Of course, there also exist neo-Kantians who, like Professor Riehl, do not at all approve of that transition.^{***} The neo-Kantians of the latter ilk are more faithful to their teacher than Doctor Lasswitz is, but then they are more faithful in preserving all their teacher's inconsistencies.

Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim!

Which edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* should be considered a true expression of idealism? Herr Conrad Schmidt has said not a word to us on this score. He does not even seem to suspect that the viewpoint of the "critique" in the first edition differs from that in the second. Besides, he does not even seem to have an understanding either of the first edition or the second. This will be seen by anyone who will go to the trouble of familiarising himself with the esteemed doctor's philosophical prose. For instance, he writes the following: "The theory of knowledge on the basis of which Kant exposes the errors of any philosophy that

* *Fichtes Werke*, 11. Band, S. 32; 3. Band, S. 2.

** In his *Erklärung* of August 7 1799.

*** See his *Der philosophische Kritizismus*, I. B., Leipzig, 1876, S. 423-39 and II. B., 2. Theil, S. 128-76.

metaphysically strives, with the aid of pure notions, to transcend the confines of experience itself bears the stamp of complete phenomenalism, i.e., it regards as a mere phenomenon the world which we see and which serves as the object of our experience."

Kant would have been greatly surprised had he to read these lines written by a man out to defend him against Marx and Engels.

What is *experience*? That is a question Kant had to answer, as anyone must who would attempt to solve the fundamental problem of philosophy, that of determining the relation of subject to object, of thinking to being. Kant's theory of knowledge is nothing but an answer to that question. In replying to it, he explained, incidentally, the difference existing, in his opinion, between noumenon and phenomenon, between a thing-in-itself and a phenomenon. One may not be in agreement with Kant—and we are not—but it is quite impossible to consider him a trivial and superficial thinker, as Conrad Schmidt seems to do. Had Kant simply stated that we *see phenomena* and that our *experience* pertains to *phenomena*, that would have meant that his philosophy was built on the absurd *petitio principii*, on an assumption that the very question awaiting solution has already been solved.

"Here the question naturally arises," our doctor continues, "whether, in general, we can have immediate knowledge of the external world which we populate, in a way, with the impressions of our senses, and which is made understandable to us with the aid of the category of cause and effect; is not even the most general representation of a corporeal world that is moving in time and space, of a subjective nature?"

In Kant's philosophy, the words "*external world*" signify all phenomena pertaining to our "*external experience*", or, as Fichte would have put it, to our *nicht-Ich*. Even a most superficial acquaintance with this philosophy will suffice to make us understand that our knowledge of this group of *phenomena* is just as *immediate* as is our knowledge of the phenomena that pertain to our *I*. No "question" could have "arisen" along *this* direction. In just the same way, Kant could not have *asked* himself whether our *representation* of the external world was of a *subjective* nature. It goes without saying that such a representation could not be of any other nature. To *question* that means having no "*representation*" of the subject being discussed. But the words "*external world*" could also refer to *things-in-themselves*, which are the *basis of the world of phenomena*. Kant never asked whether any *immediate* knowledge of these things was possible. For him, *immediate* knowledge was that which *does not depend on the effect of things on us*, and he was very well aware of the impossibility of such knowledge. "For sensation is possible only within oneself, not

without oneself," he says in the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*.^{*} But Kant was entitled to ask himself—and did so—whether we can be *sure* of the existence of things outside of our consciousness. The reader already knows how he answered this question in different periods of his life. Let us now see what Doctor Schmidt has to tell us about that.

"Since here, too, it seemed to Kant that there were compelling grounds for doubt, he did not shrink from that final step. To him, space and time, matter and the concepts with the aid of which we decipher the world were something existent only in human representation and thinking; he considered the unknowable, the thing-in-itself, as the primary source whence that sensation flowed. The most underlying foundation of all that exists is something beyond human understanding; everything that takes place is a constant miracle because it stems from what is beyond understanding. The groundlessness" (die Bodenlosigkeit) "of this thought provided Fichte, Schelling and Hegel with the initial premises for a new kind of metaphysics, which was far more profound and rich in thought, but still more suspended in mid-air and still more lacking in substantial content."

This protracted tirade boils down to Kant having denied the existence of things (-in-themselves) outside of our consciousness. There is no need for us to expose the "groundlessness" of so categorical an assertion: it contradicts a fact accomplished in time and space.

Doctor Schmidt is firmly convinced that things exist *not only* in our consciousness. From this angle, he rebukes Kant (the Kant that exists in his "consciousness") quite severely. "An intellect that begins to doubt even the objective existence of the material world itself, an existence quite independent of human consciousness, loses firm ground to stand on."

At this point, we find ourselves constrained to come out in defence of the Sage of Königsberg.¹⁹¹

We already know that by the time his *Prolegomena* was published (in 1783), Kant had *unreservedly* recognised the existence of things-in-themselves, irrespective of our consciousness. This, however, did not and could not prevent him from regarding the material world as one of *phenomena*. "It is only in the empirical mind," he says, "i. e., only in connection with experience, that matter is really given to our external senses ... as substance in a phenomenon." To attribute to such matter, and therefore to the material world created by it, an existence independent of our consciousness would, from Kant's point of view, mean committing a blunder unforgivable in a thinker.

^{*} The Kehrbach edition, p 320

However that may be, our Doctor refuses to go over to *Fichte's* point of view, which is why we invite him to tell us how he solves the contradictions in the Kantian philosophy, those indicated above and obvious even to a certain part of the neo-Kantians. It was these very contradictions that Marx and Engels based themselves on in their criticism of Kant's philosophy.

Does Doctor Schmidt recognise the existence of these contradictions? What we demand is a forthright answer: *yes or no*. Conrad Schmidt seems to admit that they do exist, but, instead of taking them into account and trying to resolve them, he prefers to regale us with a piece of "writing" couched in the following terms:

"But the bottomless chasm revealed—rightly or wrongly—to ... thinking by the Kantian philosophy is only its negative outcome; its genuinely fruitful aspect consists in masterly research into the aggregate operation of our soul-spiritual organisation" (*seelischgeistigen Organisation*), "through the agency of which the world of phenomena comes into being.... But in this, in the revealing of our representation-faculty, lies the true task pursued by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, a task that nobody either before or after Kant undertook with such amazing insight. Little as Kant's analysis can claim to have provided a satisfactory, contradiction-free and final solution of the problem—probably the most difficult of any that scientific research can set itself—it is nevertheless obvious that no attempt to penetrate more deeply into the mysterious depths of the inner world can pass by what has been done by Kant.... A return to Kant in no way means, therefore, a reverse movement in the reactionary sense."*

With the aid of "writings" in this vein, one can, of course, evade a consideration of the objections raised to Kant's philosophy, but such objections cannot possibly be refuted.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant set himself the task of studying our *faculty of cognition*, not our *representation-faculty*, as Doctor Schmidt asserts. Why distort what should be set forth with the utmost possible precision? But that is in passing.

Kant takes as his point of departure *consciousness as something already prepared*; it is not in its becoming that he considers that consciousness. Therein lies the greatest shortcoming in his "analysis of consciousness", and it is surprising that Herr Conrad Schmidt has failed to notice that today when the *theory of evolution* is triumphant in all branches of science.**

* *Vorwärts!*, the above-mentioned article.

** "I do not know," says P. Beck, "how the theory of evolution is dealt with by those philosophers that adhere to the Kantian theory of knowledge. To Kant, the human soul was a given magnitude always remaining equal to itself. To him, it was a matter of determining its *a priori* property, deducing all the rest therefrom, but not a matter of showing the origin of that

Herr Conrad Schmidt is firmly convinced that the "material" world exists, not only within our consciousness, but also without it. What we would like to hear from him is whether he thinks that this material world, which exists outside of his consciousness, acts on his cognitive faculty. If the reply is *no*, he will thereby be taking up the stand of *subjective idealism*, and we shall be unable to understand what it is that convinces him of the existence of a material world *independently of his consciousness*. If the reply is *yes*, he will be obliged to recognise, together with Marx and Engels, that Kant's "Unknowable" is full of contradictions. Logic also imposes obligations, and far more so than noblesse does.

"The materialist who holds on to the objective corporeal world, i.e., a world that exists of itself, irrespective of its relations to the human mind, as the basis and source of the life-process is just as little exempt from a study of our spiritual organisation as is the idealist," the esteemed Doctor continues.

The materialist firmly holds the view that the material world has an objective existence. So does Herr Conrad Schmidt. He is convinced that "an intellect that begins to doubt even the objective existence of the material world itself, an existence quite independent of human consciousness, loses firm ground to stand on" (see above). What, then, is the difference between the view of the "materialist", on the one hand, and of Doctor Conrad Schmidt, on the other? I see none.

But the reader will forgive me: there *is* a difference! The "materialist's" conclusions are in accord with his premises, while Doctor Conrad Schmidt prefers the "pauper's broth of eclecticism".¹⁹² That, as we see, is a big and very serious difference. Who do you give preference to, dear reader: the "materialist", or Doctor Conrad Schmidt? Indeed, *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

The "materialist" is not exempt from a study of our spiritual organisation. Of course not! But to study that organisation, the "materialist" addresses himself to experimental psychology, which deals only with phenomena and makes use of methods borrowed from biology. That is the more reliable path.

But that is already not materialism, our learned Doctor exclaims. "Anyone who sees the main distinction of materialism from idealism in a recognition of the law-governed patterns everywhere

property. But if we proceed from the axiom that Man developed gradually from a bit of protoplasm, then it will be necessary to deduce from the elementary manifestations of the primary cell precisely that which was for Kant the basis of 'the entire world of phenomena'. (*Die Nachahmung und ihre Bedeutung für Psychologie und Völkerkunde*. Leipzig, 1904, S. 33). The Kantians, however, give no thought to whether their theory is in accord with the doctrine of evolution. It is only of late that some of them, for instance, Windelband, have begun to show some doubt on this score.

to be seen in the world of phenomena is obscuring the specific nature of the controversy between materialism and idealism, thereby stripping the concept of materialism of its specific definiteness. Engels himself can serve as a characteristic instance."

But how? What did Engels actually say about the distinction between materialism and idealism?

Herr Conrad Schmidt cites the following passage from the book *Ludwig Feuerbach*:

"The separation from Hegelian philosophy was here" (with Marx.—*G. P.*) "also the result of a return to the materialist standpoint. That means it was resolved to comprehend the real world—nature and history—just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist crotchets. It was decided mercilessly to sacrifice every idealist crotchet which could not be brought into harmony with the facts conceived in their own and not in a fantastic interconnection. And materialism means nothing more than that."¹⁹³

This passage obviously does not contain a full definition of materialism. But why has Herr Conrad Schmidt cited this passage, and no other? Why has he forgotten the following argument used by Engels:

"The question of the position of thinking in relation to being, a question which, by the way, had played a great part also in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, the question: which is primary, spirit or nature—that question... in relation to the Church was sharpened into this: Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?

"The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature ... comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."¹⁹⁴

According to Engels, materialism is, consequently, a doctrine that regards Nature as something primary in relation to the spirit. Is this definition correct?

Let us recall the French materialists of the eighteenth century. What did the fundamental proposition of their theories consist in?

"To ascribe the effects that we witness to Nature, to matter in its different combinations, to the movements inherent in it means giving those effects a general and familiar cause; to wish to mount higher means getting lost in imaginary spaces where we shall never find anything but a multitude of incertitudes and obscurities. Therefore, let us not seek a motive principle outside of a Nature whose essence has always been to exist and move," says the author

of *Système de la Nature*. "...What need is there to seek outside of matter a motive force that brings it into play?"*

Would you, learned Doctor, like me to provide you with another excerpt? I shall be delighted to do so, and bring another two most convincing passages to your attention:

"There can be only natural causes and effects in Nature. All the movements that take place in it follow constant and necessary laws; the natural operations that we are in a position to judge of are sufficient to enable us to uncover those that are concealed from our gaze; we can at least judge of them by analogy; and if we study Nature with attention, the modes of action which it shows teach us not to be disconcerted by those which it refuses to display to us. The causes farthest removed from their effects indubitably operate through intermediary causes.... If, in the chain of such causes, some obstacles appear which hinder our researches, we must endeavour to overcome them; and if we are unable to succeed in that, we shall never be entitled to conclude therefrom that the chain has been broken or that the cause is *supernatural*. In that case, let us content ourselves with admitting that Nature possesses resources that we do not know, but let us never substitute phantoms, fictions" (*fabrications* as Engels would have said—*G. P.*) "...for causes that escape us; we would thereby only confirm ourselves in ignorance, halt our researches and persist in stagnating in our errors."**

And further:

"Let us say that Nature contains everything that we can know.... Let us say that Nature does everything and that what she does not do is impossible, that outside of Nature nothing does or can exist.... If we cannot discover the primary causes let us content ourselves" (mark this, Doctor, mark this!) "with the secondary causes and the effects that experience shows us; we must observe the facts available and known to us; they are sufficient to enable us to judge of what we do not know; we must rest content with the faint glimpses of the truth that reaches us through the medium of our external senses" (which means, Herr Schmidt, that we must never abandon the platform of experience—*G.P.*).***

The entire *Système de la Nature* is nothing but a development of this thought, which underlies the entire materialist doctrine of the author, or rather the authors, of this celebrated work.

Our learned Doctor will derive great benefit from listening to what another French materialist had to say:

"Man is a creation of Nature; he lives in Nature; he is subordinated to its laws; he cannot cast them off; he cannot even in

* *Système de la Nature*, éd. de 1781, t. II, p. 146.

** *Ibid.*, t. I, p. 38.

*** *Ibid.*, t. II, pp. 161-62.

17

Konrad Schmidt gegen Karl Marx und
 Friedrich Engels
 Je n'aurais fait que le camarade
 Bernstein me dit "bis gu einem gewissen Grad"
 à Kant, il le doit, il y a gu einem gewissen Grad
 au camarade Schmidt. Quelles sont
 les idées philosophiques de ce camarade,

Il les a exposés dans l'article intitulé
 "Ein neues Hoch über die Materialität" de G.
 Schmidt (Abhandlung "publié" dans le "Logos",
 H. 1, 1896 (Jahrgang 1896) (Juli und Au-
 gust) 1 et 2) dans un article sur le l
 de Frobenberg, "Kant, sein Leben und sei-
 ne Lehre". Ce dernier article a été publié da-
 ns la troisième livraison des "Vorwärts", le 1,
 Octobre 1897.

C'est donc à ces deux articles que j'e
 m'adresse.

" Dans cet article le camarade Schmidt fait
 une critique de mon livre "Materialismus und Ge-
 schichte des Materialismus", je considère cette
 critique comme très facile; mais je n'ai pas d'envie
 de lui répondre ici. Tout ce que m'intéresse
 Tournez la page.

thought emerge from their confines.... To a creature produced by Nature nothing exists beyond the confines of that great whole, of which he forms a part.... Those creatures who are said to be above Nature are nothing but chimeras, and we cannot have any idea of them."*

"Since man has, to his misfortune, wished to emerge from within the confines of his sphere, he has made an attempt to rise above the visible world" (the world of phenomena, Herr Doktor—G. P.). "He has neglected experience so as to engage in conjectures."**

What do you think of all this, Herr Conrad Schmidt? We find that our old teacher Engels was right. We find that materialism is indeed a doctrine that wishes to explain Nature through its own forces, and which looks upon Nature as something primary in relation to "Spirit". Last, it seems to us that Engels's definition of materialism can be recognised as the most general and most satisfactory one.

I say: the most general, but I know that there are also exceptions to the general rule. Thus, for instance, the English materialists held that there are creatures that stand *above* Nature. Suffice it to mention Joseph Priestley, whose doctrine is embellished with a multitude of absolutely non-materialist pendants. But these are all merely pendants, and since the English materialists attach serious significance to such pendants, they have *ceased from being materialists*. Their materialism, *as such*, is limited to an examination of the question of the relation of the soul to the body. In *this* question, however, their views are quite clear and definite.

What I call *myself*, says the same Priestley, is nothing but organised matter. He goes on to add that he cannot in any way admit the existence of the non-material principle in man: "... For the same reason that *man* has been supposed to have a soul, every *particular substance* to which any powers or properties are ascribed may have a separate soul also."***

The book I have quoted from above—*Le vrai sens du "Système de la Nature"* is attributed to *Helvetius*. Has Doctor Schmidt any clear idea of the materialism of this interesting writer, who has been so maligned by the philistines? I shall try to give him at least a slight acquaintance with *Helvetius*.

While Herr Doktor Schmidt does not doubt the existence of an external world independent of our consciousness, that existence was only *probable* to *Helvetius*. The probability (of its existence) is no doubt a very high one and the conclusions stemming from it

* *Le vrai sens du "Système de la Nature"*, Chap. I, and the Introduction to *Recueil nécessaire*, Leipzig, 1765.

** *l.c.*, p. 76.

*** *A Free Discussion*, p. 123.

are equivalent to trustworthiness, yet this is no more than a probability.*

This is so surprising that it could not ever have been expected: Doctor Conrad Schmidt in the role of "*dogmatist*" in comparison with an eighteenth-century materialist. Speak of "progress" after that!

Perhaps Herr Schmidt will now consent to admit that he—the learned Doctor—has been mistaken, but not Frederick Engels, whom he would correct.

The celebrated English biologist Huxley once said in an article that present-day physiology leads straight to materialism, inasmuch as that name is applicable to a doctrine which asserts that, besides substance which possesses extent, there exists no other thinking substance, and that consciousness, like movement, is a function of matter. Huxley was mistaken only in one thing, namely, in imagining that materialism ever meant something else. All materialists have regarded matter in exactly the same way that, according to Huxley, present-day physiology has taught us to. With their characteristic consistency and fearlessness, the French materialists were able to draw, from that fundamental idea, all the conclusions possible for their time, while the English materialists were afraid to go through to the end. However, all of them shared and defended this underlying foundation of materialist theory.

In conclusion, let us summarise what has been said by us:

- 1) Herr Doktor Conrad Schmidt has very poorly understood Kant, whom he was out to defend against Marx and Engels.
- 2) He has also poorly understood Marx and Engels, whom he attempted to criticise on behalf of Kant.
- 3) He has revealed an absolutely erroneous idea of materialism.

These three grave errors in our learned Doctor are quite sufficient to raise the following question in the reader's mind: what evil spirit has induced him to engage in argument on things which, of course, could not be "*unknowable*" to him, but which have evidently remained unknown to him? This is a most interesting question. To answer it, one should recall what Tardes has called the *laws of imitation*.

The bourgeoisie's theorists of today firmly adhere to Kant's philosophy, and condemn materialism without even going to the trouble of getting to know something about it.

Herr Schmidt has followed their example and condemned the materialism of Marx and Engels.

* *Œuvres complètes d'Heivétius*, Paris, 1828, t. I, pp. 5-6, Note.

In this, he has forgotten that theorists of the working class are betraying themselves when they set about imitating the theorists of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie's aversion from materialism and its predilection for Kant's philosophy can be very well explained by the present-day *state of society*. In Kant's doctrine the bourgeoisie see a powerful "spiritual weapon" in the struggle against the ultimate aspirations of the working class. That is why Kantianism has become the vogue among educated bourgeois.

The lower classes are known to often imitate their superiors, but when do they do so? It is when they have not yet achieved a *consciousness of self*. Imitation of an upper class by a lower class is a sign that the latter has not yet matured for the struggle for its emancipation; he who wishes to promote that maturity is in duty bound to wage a struggle against that aping as well. The development of consciousness in the oppressed is a tremendous "factor of progress".

We wished to discuss dialectics too with Doctor Schmidt, but lack of space prevents us from doing so. Consequently, that must be put off for some other time, so we shall now say to him: Farewell. Ich salutiere den gelehrten Herrn!¹⁹⁵

MATERIALISM OR KANTIANISM

Was für eine Philosophie man wählt,
hängt davon ab,
was für ein Mensch man ist.

*Johann Gottlieb Fichte**

I

The reader may remember that Eduard Bernstein has awarded Doctor Conrad Schmidt the easy "though not quite pleasant task" of revealing my contradictions and disproving my false philosophical conclusions. Conrad Schmidt attempted to deal with this task in Issue No. 11 of *Neue Zeit* (1898). Let us see whether his efforts have been crowned with any success.

Conrad Schmidt's article falls into three sections: a fairly ironical introduction, a most wrathful conclusion, and the main part. I shall begin from the beginning, i.e., with the ironical introduction.

My opponent has assumed a stance of surprise, declaring that he fails to understand why I have taken up his articles, the last of which was published over a year ago. Yet, that is quite easy to understand.

I read his articles as soon as they appeared, finding them extraordinarily weak, and decided that they could not exert the slightest influence. That was why I had not the least desire at the time to enter into a polemic with their author. After all, so many poor articles do appear, to disprove which is not worth the trouble. But last spring, Herr Eduard Bernstein announced *urbi et orbi* that Conrad Schmidt's feeble articles had given him an "immediate impetus". That made me realise the erroneousness of my former opinion about the possible impact the articles in question could have, and saw that disproving them would not mean any labour lost. To subject Conrad Schmidt to criticism means, at the same time, taking a measure of the moral force of Herr Eduard Bernstein who, as is common knowledge, is out to revise the Marxist theory. Guided by such considerations, I wrote an article entitled "Conrad Schmidt Versus Karl Marx and Frederick Engels". Con-

* [The philosophy a man chooses depends on the kind of man he is.]

sequently, that article is not so much lacking in interest as my opponent asserts.

And now I shall deal with the main section of the esteemed Doctor's article.

The best refutation of Kantianism, Engels said, is provided by our daily practical activities, and especially by industry. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating,"* he went on to say. Conrad Schmidt has found, not only that Engels's reasoning is poor but—what is far worse—that he *evades* any consideration of the matter. In my article, I came out against that opinion, and showed that Conrad Schmidt had been unable to digest Engels's pudding. I had not the least intention of pleasing my opponent, so it is not surprising that neither in form nor in content did my article meet with his approval. As for the form, I shall deal with that at the end of the present article, and shall dwell on the content forthwith.

When Marx and Engels said that people's practical activities daily provide the best refutation of Kantianism, they were emphasising the strange contradiction that underlies the Kantian doctrine. That contradiction consists, on the one hand, in Kant considering a thing-in-itself the cause of our representations, while, on the other, he finds that the *category of cause* cannot be applied to it. In revealing that contradiction, I incidentally wrote the following:

"What is a phenomenon? It is a condition of our consciousness evoked by the effect on us of things-in-themselves. That is what Kant says. From this definition, it follows that anticipating a given phenomenon means *anticipating the effect that a thing-in-itself will have on us*. It may now be asked whether we can anticipate certain phenomena. The answer is: of course, we can. This is guaranteed by science and technology. This, however, can only mean that we can anticipate some effect that the things-in-themselves may have on us. If we can anticipate some effect of the things named, then that means that we are aware of some of their properties. So if we are aware of some of their properties we have no right to call them unknowable. This 'sophistry' of Kant's falls to the ground, shattered by the logic of his own doctrine. That is what Engels meant by his 'pudding'. His proof is as clear and irrefutable as that of a mathematical theorem."¹⁹⁶

First and foremost, Doctor Conrad Schmidt has attempted to disprove this passage in my article.

"If that were true," he states with the delicate irony that pervades his article, "things would be in a bad way with the irrefutability of mathematical proof." He goes on to rebuke me for an impermissible confusion of notions. "What are those things that

* [These words are in English in the original.]

act on us, and thereby enable us to learn some of their properties?" he asks. "They are things materially determined in time, and space, that is to say, the fundamental definitions and properties of such things are themselves of a purely phenomenalist character." Since that is so, it is perfectly natural for our learned Doctor to regard with contempt both Engels's pudding and the conclusions I have based on that pudding.

"Consequently, if 'Kant's invention is shattered by the logic of his own doctrine'—and we shall think so at least until we are provided with other proofs—it is evidently because an alien non-logic is brought into that logic by means of a play on words ('thing' and 'thing-in-itself')."

What contempt, and what an annihilating conclusion! The materialists (Marx, Engels and the humble mortal who is writing these lines) are playing with words (and are bringing their own non-logic into the logic of Kantianism). This can be evidently explained by the materialists—in their capacity of dogmatists and "metaphysicians"—failing to possess the faculties necessary for an understanding of Kant's doctrine. A "critical thinker" would never, never say what we poor "dogmatic" materialists make so bold to state.

But... but are you quite sure of what you are saying, most esteemed opponent? Let us consider the question we are concerned with, in the light of the history of philosophy.

As far back as 1787, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi reproached Kant, in the supplement to his dialogue "Idealismus und Realismus", with the contradiction I am referring to. Here is what he wrote on the score:

"I ask how one can combine, first, an assumption of objects which produce impressions on our senses and thus give rise to representations, and, second, a postulate which seeks to destroy any foundation for that assumption? If one takes into consideration ... that space and all things in space, according to the Kantian system, exist nowhere except in ourselves; that all changes and even changes in our own internal condition ... are nothing but forms of our representation, and are indicative of no objective actual change or processes; that such changes are not indicative either of the external or internal sequence of phenomena; if one takes into consideration that all the fundamental laws of the mind are merely the subjective conditions which are the laws of our thinking, not of Nature as such ... if one thoroughly weighs all these propositions, then one is bound to ask: is it possible, side by side with these propositions, to assume the existence of objects which produce impressions on our senses, and thus give rise to representations?"*

* *Jacobi's Werke*, II. Band, S. 308.

What you see here, Herr Doktor Schmidt, is that very "non-logic" which has so greatly displeased you in the writings of the materialists. Does that surprise you? Bear with me a little: you will hear things that are even more surprising.

As I have already remarked the dialogue "Idealismus und Realismus" came out as far back as 1787. In 1792, Gottlob Ernst Schulze, who was then a professor at Helmstedt, proved, in his book *Änesidemus*, that Kant and his pupil Reinhold did not themselves realise the conclusions that logically stemmed from their doctrine.

"A thing-in-itself", he wrote, "is claimed to be a necessary condition of experience, but, at the same time, it is allegedly quite unknown. But if that is so then we cannot know whether things-in-themselves exist in reality and whether they can be the cause of anything. Therefore, we have no grounds to consider them conditions of experience. Further, if we assume, together with Kant, that the categories of cause and effect are applicable only to objects of experience, then it cannot be maintained that the action of things that exist outside of our representations yields the content of the latter", etc.*

Again the same "non-logic! The author of *Änesidemus* thinks — just as I do today — that, according to Kant, a thing-in-itself is the cause of our representations. We both have one and the same point of departure, the difference being that G. E. Schulze makes use of Kant's inconsistency so as to arrive at *sceptical* conclusions while my own conclusions are of a *materialist* character. The distinction is no doubt a great one, but it does not interest us here, where we are speaking only of an understanding of Kant's doctrine of a thing-in-itself.

It was not only Schulze and Jacobi who understood Kant in this fashion at the time.

Five years after the publication of *Änesidemus*, Fichte wrote that the Königsberg philosopher was understood in that sense by all the Kantians ... with the exception of Beck. Fichte went on to rebuke the popularisers of Kant for that very contradiction on which Engels based his refutation of critical philosophy. "Your globe rests on an elephant, and the elephant stands on the globe. Your thing-in-itself, which is a mere thought, is supposed to act on the subject."** Fichte was firmly convinced that the "*Kantianism of the Kantians*", which he considered nothing else but an *adventurist blend of the grossest dogmatism and forthright idealism*, could

* Since I have been unable to obtain Schulze's works, I am quoting from Zeller's *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, München, 1873, S. 583, u. 584.

** "Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre", which appeared first in *Philosophischen Journal* for 1797 and then formed part of Volume I of Fichte's *Works*.

not have been the Kantianism of Kant himself. He asserted that the real meaning of the Kantianism was expressed in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Do you know what took place after that, Herr Doktor?

In his well-known "*Erklärung in Beziehung auf Fichtes 'Wissenschaftslehre'*", Kant did not at all live up to the great idealist's expectations. He wrote (in 1799) that he considered Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* a totally groundless system, and rejected any solidarity with that philosophy. In the same *Erklärung*, Kant said that his *Critique of Pure Reason* should be understood literally (nach dem Buchstaben zu verstehen), and quoted the Italian proverb: "Heaven save us from our friends; we shall cope with our enemies ourselves". In a letter to Tieftrunk which he wrote at the time, Kant expressed his thought even more clearly. Lack of time had prevented him from reading through Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, but he was able to read a review of the book "written", Kant added, "with a great deal of warmth for Herr Fichte", and he found that the latter's philosophy resembled a spectre. At the moment you think you have been able to lay your hands on it, you discover you have grabbed nothing but your own self, with that self possessing nothing except the hands stretched out for the capture.*

Thus, the question was settled once and for all and with no ambiguity. Kant showed that the "Kantianism of the Kantians" coincided with his own "Kantianism". This was clear but it did not rid Kantianism of the contradiction indicated by Jacobi, Schulze and Fichte, and criticised by them. On the contrary, the explanation given by Kant in 1799 bore out the existence of that contradiction.

Conrad Schmidt thinks that my understanding of Kant's doctrine does not resemble the way it is understood by all the historians of philosophy. Even if that were so, that would not disturb me in the least. The indisputable historical facts I have quoted above fully bear out the correctness of my understanding of Kant. Were the historians of philosophy to disapprove of that understanding, I would have every right to say: so much the worse for the historians of philosophy. But Doctor Schmidt is mistaken in this respect just as badly as he is in everything, throughout his article.

Indeed, listen to what has been said on this score by Friedrich Ueberweg, for instance. In the opinion of this historian of philosophy, one of Kant's contradictions is that "things-in-themselves, on the one hand, are supposed to affect us, which involves time and causality; on the other hand, Kant recognises time and causal-

* *Kants Werke*, Ausgabe von Hartenstein, X. Band., S. 577-78.

ity as à priori forms only within the world of phenomena, but not beyond it".*

Have I not said the same thing?

Now let us see what Ed. Zeller has to say. "We must of course," he writes, "assume that a reality distinct from our subject corresponds to our sensations. Kant tries to show that in the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in his struggle against Berkeley's idealism." Ed. Zeller is not satisfied with Kant's arguments against Berkeley but that does not prevent him from understanding the real meaning of the Kantian doctrine, and saying: "Kant always asserted that our sensations are not merely a product of the thinking subject but refer to things that exist independently of our representation."** In his criticism of Kant's philosophy Zeller, incidentally, says the following: "If he" (Kant) "accepted the concept of causality as a category of our intellect, a category which, as such, is applicable only to phenomena, he should not have applied it to the thing-in-itself; in other words, he should not have considered the thing-in-itself the cause of our representations."***

Here we see the same understanding of Kant that Engels held and which I hold. Had Doctor Conrad Schmidt learnt it, he would, of course, never have declared that it was contradicted by all the historians of philosophy.

Erdmann, too, for whom a thing-in-itself was merely an ultimate concept was obliged to acknowledge that Kant's thing-in-itself is a "condition" of phenomena that is "independent of us". But if that thing-in-itself is a condition of a phenomenon, then the latter is conditioned by it, and we again have the contradiction that came in for so much discussion by people of understanding throughout the nineteenth century, a contradiction that only the profoundly penetrative mind of our doctor irrefragabilis could have failed to notice.

I am, of course, well aware that some historians of philosophy turn Kantianism into idealism pure and simple. But *some* does not mean all, in the first place; secondly, if Doctor Schmidt is in agreement with these historians, he should try to prove to us that they are right. He has chosen an easier path by limiting himself to calling the interpretation of Kantianism held by Marx and Engels an absurd invention of ignoramus.

We have seen that, according to Conrad Schmidt, it is not things-in-themselves that affect us, but things that are determined in time and space. I would not set about disputing that were my opponent to say that such is the actual meaning of his own phi-

* *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, III. Theil, Berlin, 1880, S. 215.

** *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, S. 436.

*** *ibid.*, S. 514.

losophy. However, he claims that such is the meaning of Kant's philosophy, and that is something to which I must object most emphatically.

I would ask Conrad Schmidt to open *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* and read, in the second main section, the second note to the fourth theorem. In this passage, Kant sets forth the view of a certain geometrician, which he fully shares; it consists in the following: "Space is in no way a property inherent as such in any thing, outside us; it is merely the subjective form of our sensual perception, a form in which the objects of our external senses appear to us; we do not know those objects as they are in themselves, but we call their appearance matter...."*

What is referred to here—things-in-themselves, or things determined in space and in time? Obviously, things-in-themselves. And what does our Kant say about these things? He says that we do not know what they are in themselves, and that they appear to us only in the subjective form of space. What is needed for them to appear? They must affect our senses. "The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by the said object, is sensation."** Conrad Schmidt may again try to salvage the position he holds and to convince us that Kant is speaking here of things that are determined in space and time, i.e., *phenomena*, which, as stated in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, "*exist, not by themselves, but only in us.*" To preclude all such attempts, I shall cite another passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which reads: "Because we have to deal only with our representations; what things-in-themselves are (irrespective of the representations through which they affect us) is something quite outside the sphere of our cognition."***

This, I think, is clear enough: *things-in-themselves affect us through the representations they give rise to.*

Conrad Schmidt speaks, in his article, of "comical misunderstandings". He is perfectly right, only he has forgotten to add that *all these misunderstandings are of his own making.*

Conrad Schmidt assures us that the passage I quoted from *Prolegomena* bears out my proposition only at first glance, and only because it has been "torn out of the general context". That is not true, and I leave it to the reader to judge for himself: "Things are given as existing outside of us, but we do not know what they are in themselves...." What things does this refer to? Things-in-themselves. That is clear, but let us see what comes

* *Kants Werke*, VIII. B. S. 432.

** *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Der transzendentalen Elementarlehre, I. Theil, Der transzendentalen Aesthetik, § 1.

*** *Elementarlehre*, II. Theil, I. Abtheilung, II. Buch, II. Hauptstück, Zweite Analogie, Beweis.

next: "But we know only their appearances." Appearances of what? Of things already determined in space, time and so on, or of things-in-themselves? What a strange question. Who will fail to see that Kant is speaking here of things-in-themselves? But let us proceed: "These are representations which are caused by the effect of things on us." What things cause representations in us? Things-in-themselves, of which we cannot know anything. But in what way do these things evoke representations in us? "Through their affecting our sensual perception." The conclusion is: things-in-themselves affect our sensual perceptivity. How many doctoral mortarboards must be worn out to become so incapable of understanding "things" that are so clear "in themselves"?

As for the "link" between the passage I have quoted and the general context, I would ask the reader to judge for himself after reading the first paragraph of *Prolegomena*, particularly the second note to that paragraph. Besides, I would draw the reader's attention to Paragraph 36 in the same book, where we read the following: "In the first place: how is Nature in the material sense, i.e., in contemplation, as the essence of phenomena—how are space, time and what fills them both; how is the object of perception at all possible? The answer is: thanks to our senses which, in keeping with their specific nature, receive impressions from objects which are unknown by themselves and are quite distinct from those phenomena." Now tell us, Doctor Schmidt, what objects affect our senses?

My opponent asserts that, in my articles, I treat him almost as though he were a schoolboy; speaking for myself, I have not the least desire to act the schoolmaster towards him, yet I cannot refrain from offering him some good advice. Mein theurer Freund, ich rath' euch drum zuerst Collegium logicum.*

But let us hark back to Kant. "His assumption of the existence of the thing-in-itself—though he hedged it about with various reservations—is based on a deduction from the law of causality, i.e., on empirical contemplation, or, more precisely, the sensation in our organs of sense which it derives from, having to possess an external cause. But, according to his own and quite correct discovery, the law of causality is known to us *à priori*, i.e., it is a function of our intellect, and consequently is subjective in origin". The "non-logic" in these lines belongs to Arthur Schopenhauer;** that "non-logic" is so strong that our Doctor's feeble

* [My dear friend, I therefore advise you, first of all, to go through the school of logic.]

** *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, I. Band., Leipzig, 1873, S. 516. It is superfluous to add that I see Kant's "revelations" in a different light than Schopenhauer does.

"logic" smashes against it like a bottle against a stone. Whatever Doctor Conrad Schmidt and his ilk may say, there can be no doubt that a strange contradiction underlies the Kantian system. But a contradiction cannot serve as a foundation; it is indicative only of groundlessness. Consequently, the contradiction must be eliminated. How is that to be done?

For that, there are two roads: one of them consists *in development towards subjective idealism*, the other *in development towards materialism*. Which road is the right one? That is the gist of the matter.

According to subjective idealism—for example, that of Fichte—a thing-in-itself is located within the *I* (das im ich gesetzte).

Consequently, we have to deal only with consciousness. That is what Fichte says frequently and unambiguously: any being, that of the *I*, just as that of the *not-I*, is merely a certain modification of consciousness. But if that is so, if "genuine and real being is that of the spirit" as is asserted by the same Fichte, then we arrive at strange and unexpected conclusions. Indeed, I shall be obliged to acknowledge, in that case, that all the people who seem to me existent outside of my *I* are *only modifications of my consciousness*. Heine once wrote of several Berlin ladies who indignantly asked whether the author of *Wissenschaftslehre* recognised at least the existence of his own wife. This jest, which contains a true thought, reveals the Achilles' heel of subjective idealism. At any rate, Fichte himself sensed this and endeavoured, as much as he could, to eliminate this weak point in his system. He explained that his *I* was *not an individual* but a World *I*, an Absolute *I*. "It is clear that my Absolute *I* is not an individual," he wrote to Jacobi, "in the sense that I have been interpreted by offended courtiers and importunate philosophers, so as to impute to me the shameful doctrine of practical egoism. But the individual must be deduced from the Absolute *I*. My *Wissenschaftslehre* will deal with that in the doctrine of natural law." However, we meet, in his natural law, arguments only such as the following: "A rational being cannot posit itself to possess consciousness of self as such, without considering itself an *individual* among other rational beings existing outside of him." This is a very feeble "*deduction*". The entire force of the proof rests on the emphasis placed on the word *individual*. A rational being cannot see itself as such without being aware at the same time of the *not-I in general*, i.e., of *people* and *things*. Is this proof of the existence of things outside the consciousness of this rational being? It is not. Consequently, neither is it proof of the existence of other individuals.

Instead of "deducing" (deduzieren) the existence of people, Fichte makes their being a *moral postulate*. But that means *bypassing* the obstacle, not *surmounting* it. Until we have surmounted it,

we have not got rid of the absurdities to which any philosophical system must lead, which denies the existence of things outside of us and their effect on *our* external senses. If the existence of other individuals is only in the spirit, then my mother is merely a *phenomenon*, and, as a phenomenon, she exists only in me.* Consequently, to say that I am born of woman is absurd. It is with just as little confidence that I can say that I shall die sooner or later. I know only that other people die, but since they are nothing but representations, I have no right to assert that I am just as mortal as they are; in this case, a logical conclusion on the basis of analogy is not valid.

One can easily realise the bewildering maze of absurdities we shall enter should we begin to consider and study the history of mankind and our Universe from the viewpoint of idealism.

Thus, the development from Kantianism towards idealism, though it does eliminate the contradiction underlying the Kantian system, leads to most patent and ridiculous absurdities.

II

Let us now see what the development from Kantianism towards materialism will lead us to. But in the first place we must agree on the terminology. What kind of materialism do we have in mind? Is it the materialism which has existed in the minds of philistines, who are noted far more for a fear of God than for philosophical talent? Or perhaps, the reference is to *genuine* materialism, i.e., that materialism whose fundamentals are contained in the writings of the leading materialists? *Materialism* has been slandered no less than *socialism* has. That is why, when we hear arguments on materialism, we must sometimes ask ourselves whether this doctrine is not being distorted.

My esteemed opponent is among those who set about refuting materialism without going to the trouble of making a thorough study of it and trying to understand it. He says, for instance: "The materialists should affirm that this essence" (i.e., the essence that corresponds to phenomena—*G.P.*) "is identical with phenomena." This is not only erroneous but an error that is indeed delicious in form.

We materialists are to affirm that the essence of things is *identical* with phenomenal! Why should we make a statement that is just as preposterous in form as it is in its "essence"? Perhaps we should do that so as to make it easier for Herr Conrad Schmidt to cope with the "easy task" of refuting us? Materialists are kindly

* "...But, as phenomena, they cannot exist of and by themselves, but only in us" (Kant).

people no doubt, but to demand such excessive courtesies from them means going too far.

The Herr Doktor goes on to say that the materialists accept an existent reality as one wholly *independent* of human consciousness in sich and an sich (?), i.e., those most general definitions which are of necessity perceived by our senses, or, more correctly, by our mind processing the impressions received by our senses as the basis of phenomena about us. Above all, space and time, and the matter that is in motion in them, are seen by the materialists as a reality that is totally independent of the properties of human consciousness, and exists in itself. Conrad Schmidt goes on to say:

"Consequently, materialism is a philosophy of identity because even where it notes the ... distinction between our representations and what exists in itself, thus emerging from the confines of naive realism, it nevertheless considers it possible to cognise ... the thing-in-itself through an analysis of phenomena."

Is that so? Indeed, it is not. To realise that, let us see what Holbach has to say: "If of all the substances that strike our senses we know nothing but the effects they produce on us, after which we ascribe certain qualities to them, then at least these qualities are something definite and give rise to distinct ideas in us. However superficial the knowledge our senses provide us with, it is the only kind of knowledge that we can have; constituted as we are, we find ourselves obliged to rest content with such knowledge...."*

I would ask the reader to peruse these lines with particular attention and grasp their content. It is worth the trouble because the passage provides an extraordinarily clear idea of eighteenth-century French materialism as the apex of the development of *pre-Marxist* materialist philosophy.**

According to Holbach, i.e., the authors of *Système de la Nature*, which Holbach did not write alone, there are things outside of

* *Système de la Nature*, Londres 1781, 2^e partie, p. 127.

** Incidentally, my preceding articles contained quotations from many materialists, showing that Conrad Schmidt has an entirely false idea of the "essence" of materialist philosophy. In his reply, Conrad Schmidt has called the materialists I have quoted from Enlighteners. That is very adroit, if not pedantic, of him because readers unfamiliar with the history of philosophy may ask themselves why Mr. Plekhanov should have had to refer to Enlightenmenters when the discussion was about the materialists! To reassure such readers, I must add that I was quoting from Holbach, or, more precisely, from the authors of *Système de la Nature*, among whom were both Diderot and Helvetius. As for Holbach, *Système de la Nature* is often called a code of materialism (See Lange, *A History of Materialism*, Second Edition, Vol. I, p. 361). As for Helvetius, this Enlightenmenter was one of the most talented and original materialists who ever lived. Anyone who does not know these two Enlightenmenters is not familiar with the highest and most remarkable stage in the development of eighteenth-century materialism.

us and independent of us, things that have an actual and not merely "spiritual" existence. These are things *whose nature is known to us* and which affect us, producing impressions on our senses; *in keeping with the impressions produced on us by their action*, we attribute certain properties to things. *These impressions are the sole knowledge* (superficial and very limited knowledge) that *we can have of things-in-themselves*. "We do not know the essence of any être, if by the word essence one is to understand what constitutes its nature; we know matter only by the sensations and the ideas it gives us. It is only then that we form correct or wrong judgements..."*

Does this mean stating that the essence of things and phenomena are "*identical*"? Obviously, it does not. Why then does our doctor *irrefragabilis* ascribe that assertion to the materialists? Why does he think that (they) "*must*" defend that view without fail?

"Inasmuch as," he goes on to say, "by materialism is understood merely a striving to everywhere find the causal link in natural phenomena and to establish the dependence of spiritual processes on the material, then such 'materialism' is in no way opposed to Kant's *theoretical philosophy*: on the contrary, it pursues an aim which is quite understandable and even necessary from the viewpoint of that philosophy. The oppositeness between them is revealed only when that so-called 'materialism' becomes a consistent, i.e., metaphysical, or, more correctly, *metaphenomenalistic* materialism; when it pronounces the elements of the world of phenomena to be 'things-in-themselves'."

Consequently, materialism is *either* phenomenalistic—and then it in no way deviates from Kant's theoretical philosophy—or else it is *metaphenomenalistic*—in which case it leads us to metaphysics, since it declares that the elements of phenomena are things-in-themselves. Apart from the question of whether Conrad Schmidt has expressed himself well, we can say that his *either-or* is a blend of all possible advantages, with the sole exception that it is not in keeping with reality.

Kantianism is also *metaphenomenalistic* in the sense that it acknowledges that *things-in-themselves affect us*. It is *Fichteanism* that is a genuinely and purely phenomenalistic philosophy. But Kant waged a struggle against Fichte's philosophy. It goes without saying that materialism is a *metaphenomenalistic* doctrine because it questions neither the existence of things outside of our conscious-

* *Système de la Nature*, 2^e partie, pp. 91-92. It is interesting to compare this passage with what Herbert Spencer has to say: "Thus we are brought to the conclusion that what we are conscious of as properties of matter, even down to its weight and resistance, are but subjective affections produced by objective agencies that are unknown and unknowable..." (*The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, Part II, Chapter III, [The Relativity of Feelings,] § 86, [p. 206]).

ness nor their effect on us. But since it at the same time acknowledges that we cognise things-in-themselves only thanks to the impressions *caused by their effect on us*, it has neither the need nor the logical possibility to regard phenomena as things-in-themselves. In this respect, it in no way deviates from Kantianism, despite its *metaphenomenalistic* nature. The difference between materialism and Kantianism comes to light only subsequently. By considering things-in-themselves the *causes* of phenomena, Kant would assure us that the *category of causality* is wholly inapplicable to things-in-themselves. On the other hand, materialism, which also considers things-in-themselves the causes of phenomena, does not fall into contradiction with itself. That is all there is to it. If, on the basis of this distinction, we would assert that materialism is a *metaphysical* doctrine, we would first have to acknowledge that the essence of "critical" philosophy lies in its inner contradiction.

But then, what is metaphysics? What is its object of study? The object of study for metaphysics is the *Absolute*. It wishes to be the science of the Absolute, the unconditioned. But does materialism concern itself with the Absolute? No, it does not; its object of study is *Nature* (and *human history*). "People are always in error when they sacrifice experience for the sake of philosophical systems born of fantasy," says Holbach. "Man is a work of Nature; he exists in Nature; he is subject to its laws; he cannot emerge from it even in thought. It is in vain that his spirit wishes to escape from the boundaries of the visible world; he is always forced to return to that world." These lines, which are introductory in *Système de la Nature*, which I have so frequently quoted from, comprise the "canon" of materialism, and it is quite incomprehensible how one can call metaphysical a doctrine which has never parted company with that "canon".

But what does the materialist understand by the word "Nature"? Is it a metaphysical concept to him? We shall now see whether that is the case.

The materialist understands by Nature the sum of things comprising the object of our sensual perception. Nature is the sensuous world in all its entirety. It was that sensuous world that the French eighteenth-century philosophers spoke of. To this concept of Nature they were constantly contraposing "phantoms", i.e., imaginary and supernatural beings. "It is being incessantly repeated to us," we read in *Système de la Nature*, "that our senses show us only the *outside* of things... it is acknowledged, but our senses do not show us even the *exterior* of the Divinity that our theologians have defined to us, to which they have awarded attributes, and over which they have never ceased from disputing, while to this day they have never arrived at any

proof of His existence...."* The human mind gropes in the dark as soon as it emerges from the confines of the sensuous world or, which is one and the same thing, the confines of experience. In this, (the materialists are in full agreement with Kant, only) the materialists understand *experience* somewhat differently than does the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

According to Kant, Nature is the existence (*Dasein*) of things inasmuch as that *Dasein* is determined by *general laws*. These general laws (or the pure laws of Nature) are the laws of our mind. "The mind does not draw its laws (*a priori*) from Nature; on the contrary, it dictates its own laws to Nature," Kant explains to us. Consequently, these laws have no *objective* significance; in other words, they are applicable only to phenomena, not to things-in-themselves. But since phenomena exist *only in us*, it is obvious that the Kantian theory of existence is ultimately quite subjective in character, and in no way differs from Fichte's idealistic theory.** We have already seen what a maze of absurdities anyone will inevitably find himself in, who takes that theory in earnest and is not afraid to draw all the ultimate conclusions stemming from it. And now let us take a closer look at the *materialist* theory of experience.

According to that theory, Nature is, first and foremost, the sum of phenomena. But since things-in-themselves are the necessary condition of phenomena—in other words, since phenomena are caused by the effect of an object on a subject—we are obliged to recognise that the laws of Nature have not only a *subjective* but also an *objective* significance, i.e., that the mutual relations of ideas *in the subject* correspond—whenever one is not *in error*—to the mutual relations between things *outside of one*. Of course, Conrad Schmidt will say that this is a "philosophy of identity" and that it considers the "elements of phenomena things-in-themselves". He is wrong. To prevent him from falling into greater error, I shall ask my opponent to recall the geometrical figure with whose aid Spencer tried to make it easier for his readers to understand "transformed realism". Let us imagine a cylinder and a cube. The cylinder is the subject, the cube the object. The cube's shadow falling on the cylinder is a representation. The shadow does not quite resemble the cube, whose *straight* lines are bent on the cylinder, and whose *flat* surfaces are *convex*.

* Part Two, page 109.

** "The system of experience is nothing but thinking accompanied by a sense of necessity" (*Fichtes Werke*, Band I, S. 428). It goes without saying that the Kantian theory of experience is *subjective* only in the measure in which it questions the applicability of categories to things-in-themselves. But since things-in-themselves are seen by Kant as the *cause* of our perceptions, that theory—as I have so often repeated—presents a howling contradiction.

Nevertheless, any change in the cube will bring about a corresponding change in its shadow. We can assume that something similar takes place in the formation of representations. The sensations caused in the subject by an object's effect on it are quite unlike the latter, just as they are unlike the subject, yet *to every change in the object there corresponds a change in its effect on the subject*. This is in no way the crude and vulgar philosophy of identity which Conrad Schmidt ascribes to us. This theory of experience, which takes Nature as its point of departure, enables us to avoid both the inconsistencies of Kantianism and the absurdities of subjective idealism.

It may be objected that Herbert Spencer's "transformed realism" is one thing, and materialism is another. Lack of space prevents me from giving consideration here to the main distinction between these two doctrines. All I can say in this article—incidentally, enough for my purpose—is the following: Spencer's theory of knowledge—*within the borders I am making use of it here*—is merely a further development of the ideas of the eighteenth-century French materialists.¹⁹⁷

"Without *thou* there is no *I*" (ohne Du kein Ich), said old F. H. Jacobi. For my part, I shall say: without *thou* there is no *I* that is free of certain very strong pangs of conscience. Here is a convincing example: if no Herr Conrad Schmidt existed *as a thing-in-itself*; if he were merely a phenomenon, i.e., a representation existing only in my consciousness, I would never forgive myself for my consciousness having brought forth a doctor so awkward in the field of philosophical thinking. But if an actual Herr Conrad Schmidt corresponds to my representation, then I am not responsible for his logical blunders; my conscience is clear, and that is a good deal in our "vale of tears".

Our doctor irrefragabilis avers that he is no Kantian, that rather he is *sceptical* of Kant. But I have never asserted that he may become a genuine adherent of any kind of philosophical system; I have always said that he prefers a *broth of eclecticism*. Yet, his eclecticism has not prevented him from waging a struggle against materialism, while making use of arguments borrowed from the Kantians. That, incidentally, is the way the eclectics always behave: they grapple with a doctrine with the aid of arguments they have borrowed from another one, to which they contrapose arguments borrowed from the former. Yet, Herr Bernstein, to whom Doctor Schmidt's miserable article has given an "*immediate impetus*" (poor Herr Bernstein!) has gone as far as Kant in his retrogression. True, he has reached Kant only "up to a certain point". *But the parishioners always take after the priest*, as the Russian proverb says. The eclectic disciple "takes after" the eclectic teacher. In any case, it is noteworthy that Conrad

Schmidt's articles make some readers inclined to return to Kant, not to any other philosopher.

Finally, I shall go over to the highly wrathful conclusion of Herr Conrad Schmidt's article.

I have affirmed that the bourgeoisie are interested in resurrecting Kant's philosophy because they hope that it will help them to lull the proletariat into quietude. It is with his customary elegance of style that Conrad Schmidt replies to me: "Whatever opinion we may have of the bourgeoisie's intellect, they are not so crassly stupid as to harbour such absurd 'hopes'. What boundless schematism; what lack of all and any criticism and any original and lively attitude towards reality lies concealed behind such devices of construction," etc., etc.

May I be allowed to interrupt the wrathful doctor, and ask him several questions:

1. Are the bourgeoisie interested in "edifying" the proletariat and countering atheism, which is spreading more and more in that class?

2. Do they need a strong spiritual weapon for that "edification" and that struggle against atheism?

3. Has Kantianism not been considered a weapon most suited for that purpose, and is it not considered as such to this day?*

Conrad Schmidt is evidently very poorly acquainted with the history of philosophy. If he knew it, he would be aware that *Kantianism was greeted, when it first appeared, as the best weapon for the struggle against materialism* and other "shocking" doctrines. Carl Leonhard Reinhold—that first vulgariser of Kantianism—already saw as one of the chief merits of that system its "*obliging natural scientists to abandon their groundless claims to knowledge*".** He wrote that atheism, which is now so widespread "under the guise of *fatalism, materialism and Spinozism*... is presented by Kant as a phantom that deludes our minds, with an effectiveness beyond the reach of our modern theologians, who engage in exposing the Devil; if there still remain fatalists, or if they will appear in due course, they will be people who have either ignored or failed to understand the *Critique of Pure Reason****.

Crassly stupid! No, believe me, it is not the bourgeoisie that are marked, in this respect, by stupidity.

"If I, like all those indirectly attacked by Plekhanov, were inclined to Kant's philosophy in imitation of the bourgeoisie,"

* It goes without saying that the bourgeoisie have no need to address Kantianism directly to the workers. It is sufficient for that philosophy to become the vogue, thus providing some people with the pretext to spread among the working class the ultimate conclusions stemming from it.

** *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1790, I. Band, S. 114.

*** Ibid., S. 116.

says Herr Schmidt, "then it is surprising that we are interested precisely in its theory of knowledge, i.e., that part of Kant's philosophy which, in any case, has nothing in common with the practical interests of the bourgeoisie."

To this I shall reply in the words of Reinhold, as quoted above: you have either ignored the *Critique of Pure Reason*, or failed to understand it.

Kant, who, it may well be imagined, had a better understanding of his own theory of knowledge than Conrad Schmidt has, says the following in the Preface to the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*: "Thus, I cannot even *make the assumption of God, freedom and immortality*, as the practical interests of my mind require, if I *do not deprive* speculative reason of its pretensions to transcendent insight.... I must, therefore, abolish knowledge, to make room for belief."

No, and again no!* The bourgeoisie are far from being stupid! A few words more before I conclude.

Conrad Schmidt accuses me of resorting to "the most arbitrary combinations of ideas so as to undermine the political credibility of those who permit themselves to think differently from Plekhanov in the sphere of philosophy".

This is thrice wrong:

1. Everything said above has shown in sufficient measure that the "combinations of ideas" to which I have "resorted" are in no way "arbitrary".

2. In my polemic, I have always pursued the *truth* and have been little concerned with anyone's political *credibility*. It is highly "arbitrarily" that Conrad Schmidt has interpreted what he has read in my heart.

3. In my articles, which have so angered our Herr Doktor, I have defended, not the "view held by G. Plekhanov" but that of Engels and Marx. The only thing which G. Plekhanov can and does lay claim to is a correct understanding of that view. I defend and shall always continue to defend that view with ardour and conviction. And if some readers "shrug their shoulders" at my being so ardent in a polemic that is concerned with the most important questions of human knowledge, and, at the same time, deal with the most vital interests of the working class—inasmuch as it is very harmful for that class to feed on what Engels called the pauper's broth of eclecticism—then I shall shrug my shoulders in my turn, and say: *so much the worse for such readers*.

* It should be borne in mind that interest in the practical "part" of Kant's philosophy is today ever more gaining the upper hand over the interest in its theoretical part, in circles that are interested in that philosophy.

MATERIALISM YET AGAIN

"Il faut qu'un professeur parle, parle, parle non pas pour dire quelque chose, mais pour ne pas rester muet,"* Proudhon has written somewhere. Herr Doktor Conrad Schmidt firmly follows this rule, though, to the best of my knowledge, he was merely a Dozent, not a Professor, for a number of years. In a note published in issue No. 22 of *Neue Zeit* under the title of "Was ist Materialismus?" he asks me a question I have already replied to in my article "Materialism or Kantianism". Being utterly loth to waste words on the matter, I at first felt reluctant to repeat what I had already stated in no uncertain terms. Some of my friends, however, drew my attention to a footnote appended by the editorial board of *Neue Zeit* to Conrad Schmidt's note, declaring that his concluding remarks "raised some new and important questions, and that their opinion might well be shared by some readers. After some lengthy hesitation, I have therefore decided again to reply to the "new and important questions" raised by Herr Doktor Conrad Schmidt.

My opponent says that I should ask myself whether such writers as La Mettrie, Holbach, Diderot and Helvetius could be considered genuine materialists. The Herr Doktor does not regard them as such, numbering them among the *eclectics*. This, it must be admitted, is really something *new* since until now it has never occurred to anybody to call eclectic such works as *L'homme machine*, *Le Rêve d'Alembert* and, finally, *Système de la Nature*, the latter book being "often called the code or Bible of materialism",** according to F. A. Lange's very just remark.

Even if this view of the Herr Doktor is "new", it is of not the least "importance" because it lacks any serious foundation. The only reason for his advancing it is his feeling that he is in a very awkward situation.

If Herr Schmidt now assures us that La Mettrie and Holbach were not materialists, it is for the sole reason that these two

* [A professor should speak, speak and yet again speak, not in order to say something but just to avoid being silent.]

** *Geschichte des Materialismus*, Iserlohn, 1873, I, 361.

philosophers' doctrine does not fit into the concept of materialism he has arrived at *from hearsay*.

I say *from hearsay* because he does not seem to have gone to the trouble of studying the works of writers he has passed such surprising judgement on.

Indeed, why does Herr Schmidt consider the French eighteenth-century materialists eclectics? It is because they were under the influence of English philosophy in general, and of Locke in particular. In the first place, however, the latter's influence is quite imperceptible in La Mettrie's doctrine, which derived wholly and directly from the materialist half of *Descartes's* doctrine. In the second place, the very nature of Locke's sensualism, far from precluding the materialist conclusions drawn from it by Holbach and the "Holbachians", simply suggested those conclusions. Herr Schmidt calls Locke a *phenomenalist*. Why? Can it be on the basis of his well-known "essay" on the primary and secondary qualities of things surrounding us? But this is a distinction we can find as far back as in the *materialist* Democritus, as Herr Schmidt can discover with ease, for instance, from Zeller, the well-known historian of Greek philosophy.* With the materialist Thomas Hobbes, this distinction already played a very important part, as Schmidt will clearly see from Paragraph Four in Chapter II of his *On Human Nature*, or at least from *Geschichte des Materialismus* by Lange, who is quite right in saying that according to Hobbes "...all the so-called sensual qualities, as such, do not belong to things but arise in us ourselves". True, Lange here ascribes to Hobbes the seemingly "purely materialist" thought that "human sensations are nothing more than movements of parts of the body caused by the external movement of things". That is not quite the case. The radical question asked by Hobbes as far back as 1631: "What kind of movements can give rise to sensations and the operation of the imagination in living creatures?" clearly shows that, *with Hobbes, sensation was not movement, but an inner condition of a body in motion*. That is exactly what we find in La Mettrie and Holbach; the latter translated into French Hobbes's work mentioned above, on human nature. But perhaps Hobbes too was an "*eclectic*"? If that was so, I would like to learn who it is that Herr Schmidt would consider a genuine and honest materialist. I am very much afraid that the bill would be met only by Karl Vogt and his fellow-thinkers, and also perhaps (and even then by stretching a point) several representatives of the materialism of *antiquity*.

At all events, there can be no doubt that the *materialism of Marx and Engels*, which has come in for "*criticism*" from Herr

* See his *Philosophie der Griechen*, Erster Teil, 3. Auflage, S. 705, Note 1.

Schmidt, in no way fits into the definition of materialism as given by that gentleman.

Marx says that "...the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought".¹⁹⁸ It is on such grounds that Herr Schmidt has numbered Marx among those who think that man's spiritual nature can be explained only by material qualities, only by "matter and force". This alone goes to show how poorly the worthy Doctor has understood Marx. If I *translate* (übersetze) something from Russian into French, for instance, does my action signify that the language of Voltaire cannot be explained only through the qualities of the language of Pushkin, and that, in general, the latter is more "*real*" than the former? Not at all. It signifies that there exist *two languages*, each with its own specific structure, and that if I ignore the grammar of French I shall produce, not a translation but simply a piece of confused jumble, neither understandable nor readable. If, in Marx's words, the ideal is nothing else than the material translated and transformed in the human mind, then it is clear that, according to the same opinion, the "material" is not *identical* with the "ideal", because, conversely, there would be no need to transform and translate it. That is why there are absolutely no grounds for the absurd *identicalness* which Schmidt is attempting to impose upon Marx.

But if a given French sentence does not resemble the Russian sentence it has been translated from, it does not follow therefrom that the *meaning* of the former should differ from that of the latter. On the contrary, given that the translation is a good one, *the meaning will be one and the same* in both sentences, despite all dissimilarities.

In exactly the same way, while the "ideal" that exists in my mind does not resemble the "material" it has been "*translated*" from, it does have *the same meaning*, if the translation is a good one. *Experience* is the yardstick of the correctness of the translation. If the meaning of the "ideal" in my mind did not correspond to the actual qualities of the "material", i.e., the things external to and independent of my mind, those things would teach me a more or less bitter lesson the very first time I came up against them, a lesson that would more or less rapidly remove the discrepancy between the ideal and the material, if only, of course, I did not perish as a consequence of that discrepancy. It is in that sense (and only in that sense) that one can and should speak of the *identity* (Identität) of the ideal with the material; the weapon of Schmidt's "criticism" is quite powerless against that identity.

Our doctor irrefragabilis reproaches me with my *eclecticism*; after what has been said above, it will be seen that I am in excellent company in being counted among the eclectics. That is why

Herr Schmidt's rebuke of me affects me not at all. However, we would be well advised to make a closer examination of the arguments used to back it up with.

"Because," says the Herr Doktor, "if the operation of the law of causality is to be taken *in earnest* in respect of things-in-themselves, it is clear that in that case the *conditions* in which alone causality is conceivable, viz., space, time, and matter (or centres of forces), should be considered conditions *referring* to things-in-themselves too. Thereby Plekhanov's materialism again turns into the old and familiar materialism of philosophical identity."

In the first place, I shall note the following: I said and proved, in my article "Materialism or Kantianism", that if we do not recognise the effect on us (according to the law of causality) of things-in-themselves, then we of necessity arrive at *subjective idealism*; if we do recognise that effect, we arrive, with the same necessity, at *materialism*. Herr Conrad Schmidt does not consider himself either a subjective idealist or a materialist. How does he deal with the dilemma I have named? Though he has said nothing on that score, he seems to do so as follows: he acknowledges that things-in-themselves affect us, but does not do so "in earnest". This is a most artful device, which shows the degree to which the learned doctor's philosophical exercises are to be taken "in earnest".

As for myself, I do of course take fully "in earnest" the effect things-in-themselves have on us, as a result of which we learn some of their qualities. But what "old" and familiar materialism does that admission lead to? That is something nobody knows, because materialism in general—both the old and the new—has remained unknown to Herr Schmidt.

To the irrefutable doctor it seems that, in recognising that things-in-themselves affect us, I should think of matter as a condition that remains relevant in its application to the world of things by themselves. Let anyone understand that who is able to: that is something I do not understand, and I suspect that the Herr Doktor does not understand it either. For my part, however, I shall try to explain in a few words the notion I associate with the word *matter*.

As opposed to "*spirit*", we call "*matter*" that which, by *affecting our sense organs, gives rise to some sensation in us*. But what is it that affects our sense organs? To that I reply, together with Kant: *things-in-themselves*. Consequently, *matter is nothing but the totality of things-in-themselves, inasmuch as the latter are the sources of our sensations*.

Since I am fully "in earnest" in recognising Herr Doktor Schmidt's existence as something independent of my conscious-

ness, I am obliged to refer him to the number of those things-in-themselves that comprise the *external world* about me. The thing-in-itself known as Doctor Schmidt is able to affect my external senses: it is *matter*, but it is also capable of writing a poor article on philosophy, so *it is matter that feels and thinks*. Thus, consciousness is (in lesser or greater measure) an attribute of the substance that affects my external senses, and which I call *matter*. That this substance, "of itself", does not resemble my *representation* of matter was something known to Thomas Hobbes in his time, but that does not provide the least grounds for any rejection of materialism. On the contrary, it would be very strange for sensation and the representation it brings about to *resemble* the thing that has caused it and is, of course, *neither sensation nor representation*.¹⁹⁹ Who does not realise that being-in-oneself is not yet either being-for-oneself or being-for-others?

Herr Schmidt also says that if I accept "in earnest" the *effect* that things-in-themselves have on me, I must also accept that time and space are conditions (perhaps he wishes to say: definitions?) that are no less and no more valid in respect of things-in-themselves.

He might say that if I accept "in earnest" that things-in-themselves exist, I must assume that they *exist in time and in space*. Before engaging in any explanation of the matter, I would ask the reader to note the following:

Since the assumption seems impossible to Herr Schmidt, it remains for him only to deny acknowledgement to the existence of things independently of our consciousness, i.e., to adopt the standpoint of Fichte or Berkeley. What absurdities that leads to we already know.

That space and time are forms of consciousness, and that, therefore *subjectivity* is their primary distinctive feature, was already known to Thomas Hobbes, and would not be denied by any present-day materialist.²⁰⁰ The whole question is whether certain forms or relations of *things* correspond to these forms of consciousness. It goes without saying that materialists can give only an affirmative answer to this question, which, of course, does not mean that they recognise the false (or rather absurd) identity, which the Kantians, including Herr Schmidt, would impose upon them with obliging naivety. No, the forms and relations of things-in-themselves cannot be what they *seem* to us, i.e., as they appear to us as "translated" in our minds. Our representations of the forms and relations of things are no more than *hieroglyphics*; the latter designate exactly these forms and relations, and this is enough for us to be able to study how the things-in-themselves affect us, and in our turn, to exert an influence on them.²⁰¹ I repeat: if no correct correspondence existed

between objective relations and their 'subjective representations ("translations") in our minds, *our very existence would become impossible.*

Anyone who cannot accept the absurdities of subjective idealism must of necessity recognise the correctness of these considerations. It is self-understood that by "*anyone*" I mean all those who take philosophy "in earnest" and do not speak merely out of an academic habit, i.e., so as not to remain dumb.

It will not occur to anyone who will give careful thought to what has been said above to compare "in earnest" my views with those of Herbart or Lotz. However, there may be grounds for the objection that "my" *materialism* closely resembles *agnosticism*, for example, that of Herbert Spencer. To that I shall reply in Engels's words: English agnosticism is merely a *shamefaced materialism*.

But enough. My views are not clear to Herr Schmidt. Perhaps I *have set* them *forth* poorly? But why is it that my opponent refutes them so deplorably? Is it not because he *understands* them so badly? Is it not because he has no other idea of materialism than that held by the German philistines? I think *that* is the reason. If that is so, then the blame for the misunderstandings that have arisen between us should be laid, not on me but on that thing-in-itself that goes by the name of the learned Doctor Conrad Schmidt.

**REPLY TO AN INTERNATIONAL
QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE NEWSPAPER
*LA PETITE RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE***

Geneva, September 1899

Dear Citizens:

You have honoured me by wishing to learn my opinion on the following questions:

1. *Can a socialist party, without betraying the principle of the class struggle, intervene in clashes between various bourgeois groupings, whether with the purpose of saving political freedom or, as in the Dreyfus case,²⁰² in defence of humanity?*

2. *In what measure can the socialist proletariat take part in a bourgeois government; does the principle of the class struggle contradict, absolutely and in all cases, the partial gaining of governmental power by a socialist party?*

I shall reply with the greater willingness since these questions, as you have so correctly pointed out, present international interest. They are of such importance that the entire future of our Party hinges on the way in which socialists deal with them in one sense or another.

Here is what I think of the matter.

As I see it, the socialist proletariat is not only entitled but is in duty bound to intervene in clashes between various bourgeois groupings whenever it finds that useful to the interests of the revolutionary movement. However, that intervention can be of use to the revolutionary movement and should take place only in cases when it is capable of giving greater activity and determination to the struggle between the bourgeoisie, i.e., the possessors of the means of production, on the one hand, and the proletariat, i.e., the class exploited by the possessors of those means, on the other.

For the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to become ever more active and resolute, it is necessary for the proletariat to become more and more imbued with the consciousness of the opposedness of its interests to those of its exploiters. The proletariat's revolutionary consciousness is that awesome dynamite of the socialists that will explode present-day society.

Everything that promotes the development of that consciousness should be considered a revolutionary means, and therefore acceptable to socialists; everything that blunts that consciousness is anti-revolutionary, and should therefore be condemned and rejected by us. That is the main principle all our tactics should be based on.

Adhering as I do to that point of view, I am inclined to think that socialists' participation in a bourgeois government would bring us more harm than good, since it would lead to a weakening of the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness. I am aware, however, that there are exceptions to any rule, and that, if understood in absolute terms, any principle becomes metaphysical. I therefore allow the possibility of individual and exceptional cases of a socialist party being obliged to agree to one of its representatives joining a bourgeois ministry, but the right of decision should, in such cases, always belong to the party, not to any particular member.

It should also be added and emphasised that any decision to join a bourgeois government can be made by socialists only with an immediate and clearly expressed aim—that of speeding up the disintegration of present-day society.

Accept, dear comrades, assurances of my friendly esteem.

G. Plekhanov

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL VIEWS OF KARL MARX

(A speech)

Ladies and gentlemen, Citizens:

In view of the limited time granted to speakers today, it is perhaps too bold on my part to attempt to give an appraisal of Marx's contribution to philosophy and social science. Yet I shall try to do that, and if I do not measure up to that task, so much the worse for me.

Marx's philosophy springs logically and inevitably from Hegel's—that is what we are so often told by those who have made a study of the origins of present-day socialism. That is true, but it is not all; far from it. Marx succeeded Hegel in the same way as Jupiter succeeded Saturn, by toppling him from his throne. The appearance of Marx's materialist philosophy was a genuine revolution, the greatest in the history of human thought. For an appreciation of the significance of that revolution, one has to cast a glance at the condition of materialist philosophy in the eighteenth century.

The idea of evolution in Nature and in human society was almost completely alien to the materialism of those times—that bold and militant philosophy. True, Denis Diderot, one of its most outstanding thinkers of the period, often voiced views that would do credit to our present-day evolutionists. However, these profound and brilliant views did not comprise the essence of the materialists' doctrine; they were merely exceptions, and as such could only bear out the general rule. I cannot go into details of the matter here, which is why I shall cite only two examples.

Read through Holbach's celebrated book *Système de la Nature* and note the chapter in which the author speaks of man's origin. You will see that the greatest difficulties the author came up against were those that refer to man's *zoological* evolution and our planet's *geological* evolution.

The second example will be taken from the sphere of morals. The eighteenth-century materialists have been accused by almost all historians of philosophy of having preached selfishness. That is a bad mistake. To Helvetius, Holbach and their friends, the

social weal, not the *personal*, was the foundation of all morality. *Salus populi—suprema lex* (the public weal is supreme law), said Helvetius. In that case, what is the explanation of a mistake so widespread in the world of philosophy and literature? It derives from a source that has already been mentioned: the materialist philosophers of the eighteenth century could not consider morals from the evolutionary point of view. It is only historical evolution that can explain to us why and how the social weal becomes predominant in the morals that reign in a given society. That evolution, however, most often takes place without the knowledge of individuals, who obey the moral demands of their society or *their class* as the behest of absolute morality as sanctioned by religion or metaphysics. It is not the individual's subjective mind but the objective logic of social relations that dictates one course of behaviour or another to the individual. Lacking any knowledge of evolution, the philosophers of the last century could have resort only to what they called Reason.

They tried to *prove* that even from the standpoint of personal interest, it is better to give preference to the social weal. It is not surprising that the Reason they addressed themselves to often resembled a man with a most excellent heart that prompts the most noble sentiments in him, but with a mind which at the same time cannot escape from the logical labyrinth of individualist utilitarianism.

The first half of our century saw the complete rehabilitation of idealist philosophy. Nobody wished even to hear of materialism, which was regarded with the utmost contempt. If you compare the idealist philosophy of the nineteenth century with the philosophy that preceded the efflorescence of materialism in the last century, you will see that the strongest feature of idealism in our century is that very idea of evolution, which was unknown to the materialists. That was the price paid by materialism for its error.

For its part, the idealist philosophy of our century also proved incapable of solving the problem of evolution. The logical laws of the evolution of the idea—such was the weapon employed by that philosophy whenever it had to ascertain the laws of the evolution of the Universe and the human race. However, the logical laws of the evolution of idea explain nothing in Nature and society, so the idealists were obliged to address themselves to ordinary facts and laws—the facts and laws of Nature, and those of social history. Thus, Hegel, the greatest idealist of all times and peoples, was obliged to seek in *economic* evolution explanations of historical facts that were incomprehensible from idealist point of view. Hegel's philosophy of history was an involuntary and unconscious tribute to materialism.

On the other hand, what the idealists called the philosophy of the spirit—*Philosophie des Geistes*—was demolished by difficulties that can be surmounted only by physiological psychology, a science that is totally materialist, whatever may often be said by those who engage in it.

It was thus that, in the second half of our century, philosophy has again become materialist; however, the materialism of our times has been enriched by all the achievements of the evolutionist theory.

You are no doubt aware of the role played by the idea of evolution in various fields of the great science of Nature. Suffice it to recall the names of Kant and Laplace, Lyell and Darwin. But what is the place held by the idea of evolution in the area of social science?

At present very much is being said in sociological literature—and often quite wrongly—about evolution. However, it is not enough to state that social relations are constantly changing; what is necessary is to ascertain the driving force in that change. Darwin did not limit himself to stating that species undergo change; he showed that the struggle for existence was the cause of that change. What, then, is it that brings about changes in social relations? What is the origin of various kinds of social structure?

Marx proved that the economic structure of human society is the foundation whose evolution explains all other aspects of social evolution. That stands to his everlasting credit, one that is even more important than the blasting criticism of present-day society that he gave in his *Capital*. The key to an understanding of human evolution was first given us by historical theory. It was from Marx that we first received the materialist philosophy of the history of mankind.

"My dialectic method," says Marx, "is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of the 'Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of the 'Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought....

"In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form, it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards ev-

ery historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."²⁰³

Sociologists of the Darwin school say a lot about the struggle for existence, which they would wish to perpetuate. Far from ignoring that struggle, Marx's school explains its inception and all the phases of its historical development. It has shown that, ever since mankind emerged from its primitive condition, it has consisted of various classes, the antagonism between which has been the main driving force of social evolution. We are today witnessing a furious struggle—a life-and-death struggle—between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between those who toil and those who appropriate the products of their labour. Marx has described to us the phases of that struggle, and indicated its inevitable outcome. He sided with the oppressed, calling upon them to organise and to achieve international unity. That call was answered by the masses of the proletariat. Less than fifty years have passed since there resounded the great call: "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!", and the red banner of international socialism is proudly waving in all countries involved in the capitalist system. With every day, the movement is acquiring ever greater force; with every day, its speed is growing, with every day, the struggle is becoming ever fiercer.

Let us all stand ready, for the day of the decisive battle is at hand!

THE INITIAL PHASES OF THE THEORY OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

(An Introduction to the Second Russian Edition of the
"Manifesto of the Communist Party")

Marx wrote to Ruge in September 1843 when he was about to launch publication of *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*:

"Hitherto, the philosophers have had lying in their desks the answers to all riddles, and the dull exoteric world had only to open their mouths wide for the roasted grouse of absolute knowledge to pop into. But philosophy has now become secular.... If the construction of the future and the final outcome for all time is no affair of ours, so much more is it certain what we must accomplish in the present: I am referring to a *ruthless criticism of everything that exists*—ruthless in the sense that criticism has no fear of its own results, and has as little fear of coming into conflict with the powers that be."*

Fully in keeping with this critical mood in one of the future authors of the *Manifesto* was the mood of the second author—Frederick Engels, as is evidenced by the latter's interesting article "Die Lage Englands", which was published in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and much of which set forth the views of Carlyle.²⁰⁵

Carlyle admitted that he had no Morrison's pills, no panacea, to cure ills of society. Referring to that admission Engels wrote: "In that, too, he is right. All social philosophy, as long as it still propounds a few principles as its final conclusion, as long as it continues to administer Morrison's pills, remains very imperfect; it is not the bare conclusions of which we are in such need, but rather *study*, the conclusions are nothing without the reasoning that has led up to them; this we have known since Hegel; and the conclusions are worse than useless if they are final in themselves, if they are not turned into premises for further deductions. But the conclusions must also assume a

* See Marx's correspondence with Arnold Ruge in Book 4 of *Sozial-Demokrat*, pp. 26-27.²⁰⁴

distinct form for a time, they must in the course of development evolve from vague imprecision into clear ideas....*

From the time these lines had been written, the social philosophy of Marx and Engels had also arrived at definite results in its development, these finding their first systematic expression in the *Communist Manifesto* and then being supplemented in other writings by them. These results were never marred by "vague imprecision". On the contrary, even those who do not sympathise with them, and fear them, have been compelled to admit that Marx and Engels's "studies" led them to a series of clear and original thoughts. But if Engels was right in saying that what should be valued is not the *results* so much as the *development* leading up to them, and that, in general, results are only of *temporary significance*, it may well be asked whether the results set forth in the *Manifesto* are already outdated, and whether they have not been condemned by the further course of the development that once led up to them. A witty Frenchman once remarked that he would not like to think as Voltaire had done at a time the latter would be thinking otherwise. We should follow that Frenchman's example. Were we to wish to think as Marx and Engels did, at a time the latter thought otherwise, we would thereby reveal a total incapacity to learn the living critical *spirit* of their doctrine; by defending the dead *letter* of the latter, we would stand removed from it much farther than the dogmatists Marx spoke of in the above-quoted letter to Arnold Ruge.

Marx and Engels had ruthless criticism for everything that existed, and had no fear of the results of that criticism. The followers of Marx and Engels, too, should have no fear of the results achieved by their teachers.

One would think that all this goes without saying, and that it is quite superfluous to speak on the matter, especially today when there are so many Marxists all over Europe—from St. Petersburg to Naples, and from Samara to Dublin—standing "*under the banner of criticism*". The trouble is that there are various "*banners of criticism*". It was said long ago that not everyone who keeps on repeating "Lord, O Lord!" will enter the kingdom of heaven. It now has to be said that not everyone who keeps on reiterating "Criticism, criticism!" is capable of rising above *dogmatism*. People who "criticise" Marx and Engels are now as numerous as the sands on the seashore. Criticism of Marxism has now become the vogue in certain circles of the intelligentsia in all countries. However, vogue and criticism do not go together very well; the more fashionable criticism of Marxism becomes, the more it loses *all critical content*. When they call obsolete the results arrived at by Marx and Engels,

* *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, S. 167-68.²⁰⁶

the critics cannot produce anything *new* in their stead; some of them confine themselves to empty and tedious reiteration of the word "criticism", while others return to the standpoint of the *bourgeois contemporaries* and even *predecessors* of Marx and Engels. *Such* criticism, needless to say, is no salvation from dogmatism; *that* kind of movement can in no way be called *progressive*.

The paucity of the "critical" thinking of those gentlemen who would criticise Marx reveals itself most tellingly in the sphere of philosophy. Here they contrapose to what they term the materialists' dogmatism the threadbare dogma of the Kantians regarding the unknowability of the external world. It would not be in place here to discuss that dogma, which is why we shall merely observe that, in rejecting materialism, the critical gentry do not go to the trouble of getting a better knowledge of that theory, restricting themselves to that notion of it which is so assiduously cultivated, to the greater glory of religion, by the learned, semi-learned and quite unlearned philistines and priests of various countries, and which is based on the Christian contraposition of matter to spirit.*

What we have in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is exclusively the "*social philosophy*" of Marx and Engels, and it is that subject that we shall deal with in our introduction. However, it is also a very broad subject, to examine which from all sides is impossible within the framework of an introduction. That is why we shall consider only the *fundamental idea* of the *Manifesto*, and shall examine the individual propositions contained therein in a booklet entitled *A Critique of Our Critics*, which we are now preparing for publication.

"The basic thought running through the *Manifesto*—that economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles...; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class ... can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it..., without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles—this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx."²⁰⁸

* The main scientific source from which these gentlemen draw the information about materialism is Lange's well-known history of materialism. Lange, however, was never able to regard materialism through the eyes of a sober and impartial researcher. His book did very much, not for a criticism of materialism but for the spread and fortifying among the public of an erroneous view of its historical development and its significance to social science today.²⁰⁷

That is what Engels says. Is he right? Not quite. In the first place, he is wrong in reducing to nil his own participation in evolving the fundamental idea in the *Manifesto*. In the second place, certain very important *elements* of that idea are to be met in far earlier socio-political literature.

In his excellent essay *In Memory of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party"*, Professor Antonio Labriola has very correctly observed that already the historians of antiquity, and in modern times Italian historians of the Renaissance, were well aware of the significance of the class struggle raging before their eyes within the close limits of the urban republics. No less correct is Labriola's remark that the class struggle, which has assumed a far greater sweep in the modern state, was ever more evident during the first half of the nineteenth century. He is mistaken, however, in thinking that the historical significance of that struggle was most clearly realised at the end of that period, to wit, between the years 1830 and 1850. In fact an understanding of the class struggle as a most important mover of historical development had achieved, by the twenties, a degree of clarity that was surpassed only in the writings of the *Manifesto's* authors. Between the years 1830 and 1850, that understanding was partly dimmed by the impact of causes we shall mention below.

Already in his *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève*, which appeared in 1802, Saint-Simon spoke of the relations between the "propertied" and the "non-propertied" classes, attributing the course and outcome of the French Revolution to *the struggle between those classes*. The *Lettres*, however, contain only the germ of Saint-Simon's views, which were expressed far more completely in his later writings, e.g., in the *Organisateur* (the celebrated *Parabole*), in *Lettres à Messieurs les Jurés, Du Système industriel, Catéchisme des industriels*, and *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles*. Production is the purpose of the social union, which is why leaders of production have always headed social unions, and will always do so. Until the fifteenth century, temporal power was concentrated in the hands of the nobles... it could not be otherwise because the nobles of the time guided agriculture, farming then being the only industrial occupation of great importance.* However, there gradually arose, between the first crusade and the reign of Louis XI, a new social class that organised itself as a force independent of the nobility, namely, the manufacturers in the strict sense of the word—a class which gained in strength and development during the period between the reign of Louis XI

* *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques et industrielles*, Paris 1825, pp. 144-45. Cf. *Catéchisme des industriels* in *Œuvres de Saint-Simon*, published by Olinde Rodrigues, Paris, 1832, p. 18.

and Louis XIV. Throughout that period, the industrial class did not cease from struggling against the nobles, from whom they won one economic position after another. Their need of strong support led them to enter into an alliance with the royal authority, an alliance that determined the further political development of France until the time when the monarchy, in the person of Louis XIV, betrayed its faithful ally and became a protector of the aristocracy. This was a mistake that cost the Bourbons dear but did not halt the development of the industrial class. The French Revolution and the ensuing events were the outcome of the struggle between the new industrial order and the old feudal system, whose adherents made a new attempt, during the Restoration, to regain their whilom influence and importance. However, their efforts were doomed to failure; that influence was gone for all time. "During fifteen centuries," says Saint-Simon, "the feudal system has gradually become disorganised, and the industrial system gradually organised. Tactful behaviour on the part of the leading representatives of industry will be sufficient to finally establish the industrial system, and clear society of the rubble of the feudal edifice our ancestors once lived in."*

Saint-Simon's historical views were absorbed in almost their entirety by his "adopted son" Augustin Thierry, who was to make such an important contribution to French historical science. Augustin Thierry held the stand of the third estate, and was well aware of that. Here is what he wrote in *Censeur Européen* in 1818: "Who of us has not heard of a class of people who, in times when the barbarians were overrunning Europe, preserved the industrial arts and skills for humanity? Insulted and plundered daily by their victors and their masters, they lived in hardship, receiving for their labours only the consciousness of doing good and preserving civilisation for their children and the world. These savers of our arts were our fathers: we are the sons of those serfs, those tributaries, those bourgeois that the conquerors preyed upon without mercy; it is to them that we owe everything that we are.... But we, the liberated slaves of yesterday, have so long preserved in our memories only the families and the actions of our masters; it was only thirty years ago that we bethought ourselves of our fathers having been the nation. We admired and studied everything except what they were and what they did. We are patriots and have committed to oblivion all those who, for fourteen centuries, tilled the soil of our Motherland, which was so often devastated by other hands."**

* *Œuvres*, p. 59.

** Quoted by Thierry himself in his *Dix ans d'études historiques*, Paris, 1837, préface, p. VIII.

Returning to the same theme two years later, Thierry set out to prove that the French did not yet possess a genuine history of their *people*. A history of the citizens, a history of the subjects, had not yet been written, yet it was far more interesting, and evocative of far greater sympathy than the history of the grand and the sovereigns—"the only history told to us...." The progress of the popular masses towards freedom and prosperity seems to us far more impressive than the campaigns of conquerors; the misfortunes of the people are more moving than those of dispossessed kings. If a pen worthy to describe it could be found, the French would learn that their cities could be proud of "other things than the sojourn of some great seigneur or the passage of some sovereign; and that it is not true that, for whole centuries, all their political life consisted in providing bowmen for the army, and paying tal-lage twice a year."*

Such eloquent tirades clearly show how the mounting consciousness of France's third estate brought about a radical change in the views of French historians. To the scholarly plebeians of the times, the history of the third estate was more interesting than that of the Court or the aristocracy; that was why they felt the need to develop a history of that third estate. Since, for many centuries, that history was the history of the entire people, with the exception of the nobility and the clergy, there is nothing surprising that the life of the people in past centuries began to attract the main attention of historical science, which had previously dealt only with kings and aristocrats. Historical science of the Restoration period was affected by the selfsame temper in the third estate, which had begun to influence literature and literary criticism already in the eighteenth century. We know the psychological motivations that had led up to the emergence of what is known as the *domestic drama*. "What does it matter to me, a peaceable subject of a monarchical State in the eighteenth century," Beaumarchais wrote, "how some Peloponnesian tyrant met his end, or how a young princess was offered as a sacrifice in Aulis? There is nothing for me to see in all this, no moral for me."** What Beaumarchais and his fellow-thinkers wanted to see depicted with sympathy on the stage was the life and sufferings of contemporary third-estate society. They were offended and incensed by the classical tragedy's predilection for high-born heroes. "To present people of the middle station as crushed and in affliction!" Beaumarchais exclaimed with bitterness. "Fi donc! They should never be shown otherwise than as objects of derision! Ridiculous citizens and unfortunate kings—

* See the first letter on the history of France, reprinted in *Dix ans d'études historiques*, p. 325.

** *Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux* in *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1828, t. I. p. 11.

that is the entire existing and possible theatre, and I shall content myself with saying: c'est fait...."*

Since the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie wanted to "have its own portrait", its literary representatives tried to depict its features of the times through the characters in the *domestic drama*.** In just the same way, the bourgeoisie of the Restoration period, in defending their social and political gains from persistent encroachment by the adherents of the ancien régime, were eager to hear the story of their childhood and youthful years; their scholars set about presenting it with an instructive and interesting narrative of the harassment they had been subjected to, their efforts to win a better future for themselves, and their successes in the struggle against their oppressors. Thus there arose a new current in historical science, marking a major step forward in its development.

Previous historians, whose interest had been mainly focussed on kings and aristocrats, had seen the exploits of their high-born heroes as the principal driving force of historical development. This view was also taken up by the eighteenth-century Enlighteners, who, in keeping with their revolutionary sentiments, modified it into the doctrine that opinions govern the world. Though theoretically untenable, this theory had the advantage of attaching considerable significance to the impact of the intelligentsia's revolutionary *heroes* on the *multitude* of the middle class, who were oppressed by the state and the upper estates. However, the bourgeoisie of the Restoration period, which had shortly before dealt a mortal blow at the ancien régime, no longer resembled a down-trodden multitude. Imbued with a consciousness of its strength and importance, its ideologists saw in it the mainspring of the historical advance. We are already aware of the enthusiasm with which Thierry spoke of its services to mankind and civilisation.

Once they had taken an interest in the history of their "fathers", the bourgeoisie's learned representatives could not but evolve a completely new view of the historical origins and development of social institutions.

"It is highly singular," said Augustin Thierry, "that the historians stubbornly refused to attribute any spontaneity or creativity to the masses of people. If an entire people migrates and makes itself a new home, that means, our annalists and poets assert, that some hero has taken it into his head to found a new empire to add lustre to his name; if a city is established, it is some prince that has given it life. The people, the citizens are always material for

* *Lettre sur la critique du "Barbier de Séville"* in *Œuvres complètes*, t. I, p. 258.

** Cf. Brunetière, *Les Epoques du théâtre français*, Paris, 1896, p. 287.

the thinking of a single individual. Do you really wish to learn who founded an institution and who conceived a social enterprise? Search among those who really needed it; it was to them that the first idea of it, the wish to act, and a considerable part of the execution belonged. *Is fecit, cui prodest*; this axiom is applicable in history just as in justice.”*

In view of the sympathy with the “fathers”, who had had to wage an age-old struggle against the upper classes, this new point of view—that of *social or class interest*—was bound to lead to an appreciation of the major historical significance of the struggle of various social classes for their interests, i.e., in brief—the *class struggle*. And indeed already at the outset of his literary career, Augustin Thierry spoke of the “struggle of classes and interests” in England (*la lutte des classes d’hommes et des intérêts*) as one of the main consequences of the Norman conquest.** He described the revolutionary movement in seventeenth-century England as a struggle of the third estate against the aristocracy.

“Any man whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror,” he said of the first English revolution, “left his castle to join the royalist camp to take up a command in keeping with his rank. The inhabitants of cities ... flocked to the opposite camp. One could say that the rallying calls of the two armies were: on one side, *idleness and power*, on the other, *work and liberty*. All idlers, whatever their origin, those whose only aim in life was the pursuit of enjoyment without any effort, enrolled in the royalist forces to defend interests that coincided with their own; whilst the families of the caste of the ancient conquerors who had now gone into industry united with the party of the Commons.”***

What is particularly noteworthy is that Thierry saw the religious movement of the times merely as a reflection of “positive” everyday interests. “It was for positive interests that the war was waged by both sides,” he wrote. “All the rest was merely extraneous or a pretext. Most of those who took up the cause of the *subjects* were Presbyterians, i.e., wanted no yoke, even in religion. Those who supported the opposite cause were episcopalians or papists: even in the field of religion they were out to exercise power and impose taxes.”****

When we go over to Thierry’s contemporary *Mignet*, we see the selfsame view of the significance of property interests and the role of the class struggle in the history of civilised countries. In *Mignet’s*

* *Dix ans d’études historiques*, p. 348.

** In the article “Vue des révolutions d’Angleterre”, *Dix ans d’études historiques*, p. 16.

*** *ibid.*, [p. 52].

**** *ibid.*, [pp. 52-53].

words, "the most numerous and the strongest interests dictate laws, and achieve their aims" (dictent la loi et arrivent à leur but).*

Hence one can readily understand the influence that, in his opinion, interests exerted on the development of society. "The dominant interests," he said, "determine the social movement. That movement achieves its aim despite various obstacles; it halts on achieving that aim, and yields place to another movement which is imperceptible at the outset and makes itself known only when it becomes predominant. Such was the development of feudalism, which existed in human needs before becoming a fact—the first epoch; in the second epoch, it existed in fact, while ceasing from corresponding to needs, and it was this latter circumstance that put an end to its actual existence. No revolution as yet has been carried out in any other way."** The appearance of urban communes changed all the internal relations of the societies of the time. In Italy, the communes achieved complete supremacy, this giving rise to democracy. In France they were forced to join forces with the royal authority, thereby laying the foundations of absolutism. Last, in England, where they joined forces with the feudalists against the king, there emerged a constitutional monarchy.***

Thus, the interrelations between the leading social elements of European society, i.e., the aristocracy and the third estate, determined Europe's historical development. The greater the growth of the third estate, the closer the advent of the old social order's final downfall. In France, the period of that decline was also a time of revolution, which Mignet always regarded with the warmest sympathy. Better than all his other writings, his history of the French Revolution showed his awareness of the historical significance of the class struggle. He fully realised that the struggle of political parties during the Revolution was merely an expression of the contradiction between class interests. "The aristocratic classes," he said, "had interests that were the opposite of those of the national party. That was why the nobility and the upper clergy, who sat on the Right, were in constant opposition to that party, except for several days of universal enthusiasm."**** The party of Du Port, Barnave and Lameth was "a kind of opposition within the middle class".***** The Constitution of 1791 was the creation of the middle class, which was stronger at the time than the rest. "It is common knowledge," Mignet adds, "that a force which has

* *De la féodalité, des institutions de Saint Louis et de l'influence de la législation de ce prince*, Paris, 1822, p. 47.

** *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

*** *ibid.*, p. 83.

**** *Histoire de la Révolution française*, Paris, 1827, t. I, p. 105.

***** *ibid.*, p. 111.

won domination always gains control of institutions."* He attributed the counter-revolutionary uprisings in Calvados, Gervaudan and Vendée to those areas being ill-disposed towards the Revolution, "since there was no numerous and educated middle class there".** He saw the Girondists as a party of transition from the middle class to the common people (*la multitude*), whilst in Danton, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, d'Églantine, Marat and others he saw genuine leaders of the new movement which had been launched with the aid of the lower social class and was directed against the middle class the Girondists belonged to by status and habits.*** August 10 was "an uprising of the common people against the middle class and the constitutional throne, just as July 14²⁰⁹ was an uprising of the middle class against the privileged classes and the absolute power of the crown."**** In short, the entire history of the French revolution serves Mignet as an illustration of a proposition which can with good reason be called a *formula of the progress* made in civilised societies: "Changes infringe interests; interests create parties; parties enter into struggle."***** Augustin Thierry had good reason to say that Mignet was endowed with the great talent of generalising facts and of historical induction.

Throughout his life, Mignet was a conscious, outspoken and consistent representative of the "middle class", whose social and political supremacy was his ideal. He was utterly opposed to the "common people" inasmuch as they presented a threat to that supremacy. "Les désordres de la Commune lui furent odieux," said his biographer Edouard Petit.*¹ But this friend of Thiers, the brutal pacifier of the Paris Commune,²¹⁰ regarded the revolutionary mode of action without that mixture of wretched fear and malignity that marks the big and petty bourgeois of our time. "It is only by force that one can win recognition of one's rights," he remarked in the very beginning of his history of the revolution, adding several pages later that "there exists no overlord but force".**¹ Present-day historians do not find such aphorisms to their liking. This particular aspect of their taste is explained by old Guizot.

His views on the fundamental cause of social development in no way differ from those of Augustin Thierry and Mignet. He, too, sees social relations as underlying the political. "It is through the

* *ibid.*, p. 210.

** *ibid.*, p. 227.

*** *ibid.*, p. 276.

**** *ibid.*, p. 290.

***** *ibid.*, p. 213.

*¹ *François Mignet* par Edouard Petit, Paris, 1889, p. 286.

**¹ *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. I, p. 3, 13. These expressions remind one of Marx's well-known utterance: "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."²¹¹

study of political institutions," he wrote in his *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, "that most writers, scholars, historians or publicists have sought to learn the state of society, and the degree or kind of its civilisation. It would have been wiser to have begun with society itself so as to know and understand its political institutions. Before becoming a cause, institutions are an effect; society produces them before becoming modified by them; instead of inquiring of systems or forms of government as to what the condition of the people has been, one should first and foremost examine the condition of the people in order to know what its government should or could be.... Society, its composition, the way of life of individuals according to their social station, and the relations between various classes of individuals, in short, *people's conditions*" (l'état des personnes) "such, assuredly, is the first question that attracts the attention of the historian who wishes to witness the life of peoples, and the publicist who wishes to learn how they are governed."*

According to Guizot, the "état" of all peoples that appeared on the European historical scene following the downfall of the Western Roman Empire was closely linked causally with property relations, whose study should therefore precede that of people's conditions. "To understand political institutions, one should know the diverse social conditions and the relations between them. To understand the diverse social conditions, one should know the nature of property relations."** It was from this point of view that Guizot regarded the history of France during the first two dynasties, a history he saw as one of the struggle between the various "strata" of the population of the times.

The history of the English revolution was depicted by him as a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. He called ingenious but superficial the view that the English revolution was more political than social, while the French revolution strove to change the entire sum of society and government.*** In fact, both revolutions had a common origin and a common purpose. In England, the revolutionary movement began under the impact of changes in social relations and the customs of the people. While the upper crust of the aristocracy had lost all influence over the people and had become corrupt, the ordinary gentry, the freeholders and the bourgeois, who were engaged exclusively in increasing their lands and their capital, grew ever wealthier and brought the people more and more under their influence. By degrees, with-

* *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, dixième édition, (the first edition was published in 1821), pp. 73-74.

** *ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

*** *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*, Paris, 1841, t I, préface, p. XXI. (The Preface is dated: April 1826.)

out any fuss, and almost unawares, they concentrated in their hands almost all the social forces—the “true sources of power”.* In the measure that this fundamental change in social relations was accomplished, the middle class (“les communes”) began to chafe at the tyranny. “With the growth of wealth, greater security became a need. The rights so long exercised by the prince, without meeting with protest and obstacles, now seemed to have become abuses.”** Such were the causes of the revolutionary struggle which met with numerous ups and downs, but ended in the complete victory of the middle class.

Guizot was able to trace the influence of the “social composition”, not only on society’s political structure but also on the *intellectual trends* in it. His ideas on the history of French literature, which he voiced as far back as the days of the First Empire, deserve detailed consideration, but lack of space restricts us to making mention here only of his ideas on the theatre, which, in his opinion, is a reflection of the development of social relations. In ancient Greece, where social affairs were run by the entire people, the theatre was a public entertainment reflecting the habits and tastes of all free citizens. On the contrary, in the modern societies, which are a complex blend of various classes engaged in labour and always locked in a constant struggle between themselves for supremacy, the theatre has become a form of entertainment for the upper classes. This has affected many of its virtues. After consolidating their position, the upper classes usually try to separate themselves from the rest of society, thereby losing the simple and natural habits inherent in the people, and become imbued with artificiality. That is why the sphere of artistic creativity becomes narrower and impoverished. As an example, Guizot speaks of the fate of the English theatre following the Restoration of 1660. In their contempt for the people, the English aristocracy began to ignore even Shakespeare, whom they called a boor. French tragedy was also a product of the upper classes, which is why its day passed together with the downfall of the ancien régime. The Revolution cleared the way for a “new system of drama”***.

Of course, individual propositions here do not necessarily have to be agreed with, but it must be admitted that his study of the causal links between phenomena followed the correct lines. It was in that direction that the most gifted critics and historians of French literature were to proceed, thus paving the way so well

* *Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*, Paris, 1841, pp. 9-10.

** *ibid.*, pp. 11-12. Cf. also *Discours sur l'histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre*.

*** See also his highly interesting *Étude sur Shakespeare*, in Vol. I of the French translation of Shakespeare's *Works*, Paris, 1821.

for a materialist explanation of the intellectual history of civilised mankind.

Guizot's political activities revealed his class viewpoint even more tellingly. In his *Mémoires*, he himself said that the consolidation of the middle classes' supremacy (des classes moyennes) was his invariable political aim.* He not only came out ardently and fearlessly in defence of their interests, but, as he himself put it, he wished to magnify their cause still more by taking them back to the past and revealing their interests and their vicissitudes in the entire course of French history.** This intention was superbly carried out in his political pamphlets, the most noteworthy of which is the one entitled *Du Gouvernement de la France [depuis la Restauration] et du ministère actuel*, which appeared in September 1820. In it, Guizot came out as a convinced defender of the French Revolution, which he called a war, just like wars between nations. "For over thirteen centuries France contained two peoples: conquerors and vanquished. For over thirteen centuries, the vanquished people fought to throw off the yoke of their conquerors. Our history is one of that struggle. In our times, a decisive battle has taken place. The battle is called revolution."*** The outcome of the revolution was never in doubt. An ancient and vanquished people became a people of conquerors. In their turn, they subdued France. According to Guizot, the well-known Charter merely acknowledged that fact and declared it a right. Representative government was a guarantee of that right.**** The debates in the Chamber of Deputies might have seemed strange and hard to understand only to anybody who regarded them from the viewpoint of theory, without being able to link them up with the circumstances that had engendered them. In fact, the debates were conducted "between equality and privilege, between the middle class and the ancient aristocracy".***** The ancien régime and the new France are locked in a life and death struggle. To reconcile them is a chimerical idea.*

We already know that Guizot understood the causal link between social relations, on the one hand, and intellectual trends, on the other. Political polemics gave him an extra opportunity to voice his view on this score. "Ideas, doctrines and constitutions themselves," he declared, are subordinate to circumstances and are adopted by peoples only when they serve as an instrument and

* *Mémoires*, Paris, 1858, t. 1, p. 8.

** *ibid.*, pp. 296-97.

*** *Du gouvernement de la France*, pp. 1-2.

**** *ibid.*, p. 5.

***** *ibid.*, p. 22.

*) *ibid.*, p. 108.

guarantee of their pressing interests as generally realised.* The history of the English Constitution, in his opinion, shows particularly well "in what measure circumstances dominate over the pretended theories of the representative system".** Today we see the edifice of the English Constitution and forget how it was built. "We are prone to attribute to human wisdom this progressive advance, which was the fruit of nothing but necessity."*** The theorists of the revolution were mistaken "*or were lying*" (italics are mine) in proclaiming the sovereignty of the people. In fact, it was not a question of the people's sovereignty, but of the victory of a part of the people over another part. Since the numerical superiority was immensely in favour of the third estate, the sovereignty of the people arose as a doctrine. That doctrine was necessary at the time because force stands in need of a doctrine: to believe, and to make others think that they are right.****

The adherents of counter-revolution always understood very well that, to achieve their aim, they had first to seize power and use it in accordance with their interests. For their part, the middle class should know that they have to gain possession of power, not to demolish it.*****

Representative government is instituted to concentrate and express those social needs and aspirations, and then place power into the hands of those who will be able to understand and meet those aspirations and needs.*) It goes without saying that, in Guizot's opinion, only representatives of the "middle class" possess that ability, so that power, according to his theory, should belong to that class, and not to the population *extérieure* (as Guizot called the working masses) whose rights should be recognised and defended but who could bring about their own downfall and that of the state if allowed to assume power.**)

When Marx and Engels wrote in the *Manifesto* that the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie,²¹² they were expressing the same view in respect of the representative government set up by the bourgeoisie; only they were now appraising that system of rule, not from the viewpoint of the "*middle class*" but from that of the population *extérieure*, whose supremacy Guizot could not even think of without a feeling of apprehension.

* *Du gouvernement de la France*, p. 91.

** *ibid.*, p. 127.

*** *ibid.*, p. 290.

**** *ibid.*, p. 138.

***** *ibid.*, p. 237.

*) *ibid.*, p. 283.

**) *ibid.*, p. 326, Note.

However that may have been, Guizot was indubitably very well aware of the class character of the socio-political trends he represented and defended. When the supporters of the old order began to accuse him of fanning evil passions by his propaganda of the class struggle, he replied that he wanted only to summarise the history of France. It was full of the struggle between the estates, or rather *created by it*. "This was known and said many centuries before the Revolution; it was known and said in 1789; it was known and said three months ago.* Though I am now accused of having said so, I do not think anybody has forgotten it. Facts do not vanish at the sweet will or for the fleeting convenience of ministries and parties.... What would the courageous bourgeois sent to the States-General to win or to defend their order's rights say were they to rise from the dead only to learn that the nobility never waged war against the third estate, was never alarmed at the latter's emergence or indignant at its growth, and was never constantly opposed to its progress in society and power?... Effete descendants of a race that dominated a great country and made great kings tremble, you have disowned your ancestors and your history! Aware of your downfall, you protest against your past splendour!" In making reference to the class struggle, Guizot did not want to say anything new. The class struggle was not a theory or a hypothesis but a fact in all its simplicity. "I repeat," he exclaimed, "that no credit reflects on those who have seen that, but it is almost ridiculous to contest it." Guizot felt some shame that he, a bourgeois, was obliged to give noblemen instruction in the history of France and to prove to them that they had grown "too humble in their recollections". In reply to the accusation that he was fanning passions and sowing discord among citizens, he exclaimed: "What? You are commanding us to forget our history because its conclusions have not been in your favour!"

These excerpts** are sufficiently descriptive of Guizot's militant temper at the time. To round off the picture, we shall also make mention of the epigraph to his *Du gouvernement de la France*, from which we have already quoted. It comes from Pascal's *Pensées*, and says: "*It is pleasant to be on board a storm-driven ship when you are sure you will not perish!*"

So vividly is the bourgeoisie's class consciousness expressed in all this that we stand in no need of any further excerpts. That is why we shall not speak here either of Armand Carrel's *Histoire de la contre-révolution en Angleterre* (Paris, 1827) or of Alexis Tocqueville's writings, which date later. We consider as firmly estab-

* Written in 1820.

** Cited from the *Avant-propos* to the third edition of the booklet *Du gouvernement de la France*.

lished the fact that, already during the Restoration, Saint-Simon and many learned representatives of the French bourgeoisie saw the class struggle as the mainspring of modern peoples' historical development.

We have thought it useful to establish this fact since it seems to have remained beyond the ken of many critics of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. For instance, Emile Vandervelde categorically asserts that the concept of the class struggle is "the touchstone of democratic socialism, distinguishing it from all other past and present forms of bourgeois and utopian socialism", and that this concept "was first developed, with all its consequences, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*".* We must say that a more attentive attitude to his subject can be demanded from a man who has, so to say, written a booklet for the jubilee of the *Manifesto*.

In just the same manner, Herr Werner Sombart, who has criticised the *Manifesto's* view on the great historic significance of the class struggle, has not said a single word about that view being no novelty in the political literature of the forties.** He attaches great importance to the "history of dogmas" (*Dogmengeschichte*) in present-day socialism. A closer acquaintance with that history might well have been expected of him too. In an article entitled "Essai d'interprétation et de critique de quelques concepts du marxisme" published in the February 1898 issue of *Devenir Social*, Benedetto Croce has most zealous "criticism" of Marx and Engels's theory of the class struggle. But this zealous critic too is evidently very far removed from the idea that the class struggle was taught already by theoreticians of the bourgeoisie.

We will also mention Thomas Kirkup who, in "criticising" Marx's theory from the most varied angles, with fairly detailed reference to the *Manifesto*, did not even ask himself whether the idea of the class struggle belonged exclusively to Marx.***

* *The Golden Wedding of International Socialism* (translated from the French), London, 1899, p. 5. The Russian translation of the booklet was brought out by the Free Russian Press Fund and provided with a short introduction by the publishers, in which "the evolution of healthy socialist thinking" in Europe was contrasted with "the dogmas of German socialism". The esteemed adherents of "healthy socialist thinking" have failed to discern either the above or any other errors of Vandervelde, and have even made additions to them from their own stock. Thus they have called Vandervelde "a Marxist as well as one of the most scholarly and talented representatives of parliamentary socialism". The latter is true! Vandervelde is indeed one of the most scholarly and talented representatives of socialism (parliamentary or any other brand) in Belgium, but he has never been a Marxist, as his Russian publishers could easily see for themselves from an acquaintance with his other writings.

** See *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert*, S. 1-2.

*** See *A History of Socialism* by Thomas Kirkup, London, 1900, Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

The critics of Marxism have almost invariably been on a wrong tack by failing to notice actual errors made by Marx and Engels while ascribing to them mistakes they never made.

But there are different kinds of errors. It is, of course, a good thing for the founders of a given theory to know all their precursors, and not to err in their judgements of them. However, no one would take exception to the errors Darwin might have made in speaking of the place held by his own theory in the history of evolutionary doctrines. However, if somebody set about *criticising* Darwinism, and especially if he would wish to write a *history of transformism*, he would be *in duty bound* to know Darwin's fore-runners, and it would be most strange were he, in dealing with the latter, to limit himself to simply repeating what Darwin himself said of them.

The same may be said of the critics of Marxism, and the historians of socialism. One cannot forgive their errors in the "history of dogma", which were quite understandable and pardonable in Marx or Engels.

But let us leave the *critics* for a while, and return to the *fore-runners*.

The French bourgeoisie ran into many a storm during the Restoration. However, heartened by their recent resounding victories over the aristocracy, they believed that no force could put an end to their domination, and looked into the future with confidence, finding that it was very pleasant to be on board a storm-driven ship when you are sure that it will not perish. They were not afraid at the time to speak of the class struggle and derisively refused to forget the history of their own class struggle to please the effete aristocracy. But alas! All is flux, nothing is stationary. A mere two or three decades later, the bourgeoisie were forced to see the class struggle from another angle. The working class—Guizot's population *extérieure*—launched a struggle against their class domination, this radically changing the bourgeoisie's temper: from a *revolutionary* class, they turned into a *conservative* one. The year 1848 provided them with a frightful lesson; how well they learnt the meaning of that lesson can be seen from its theoreticians beginning, from that time on, to preach "*social peace*". Always keenly aware of the condition and the needs of the "middle class", Guizot brought out, as far back as 1849, a booklet entitled *De la Démocratie*, which lauded social peace as leading to "liberty, security, prosperity, dignity", and all other "moral and material benefits". In 1849, Guizot still recalled that social war had "*made*" the history of France, but he now saw that war, not as a prime mover of progress but as a kind of Pandora's box, from which all kinds of calamities were swarming upon his country. "The struggle between the various classes of our society has filled our history,"

he repeated. "The revolution of 1789 was its most general and powerful outburst. Nobles and third estate, aristocracy and democracy, bourgeois and workingmen, property-owners and proletarians—all these have been so many forms, so many phases, of the social struggle that has so long plagued us.... This is a curse, a shame that our times cannot accept. Internal peace, peace between the various classes of citizens, social peace! That is France's supreme need, her cry for salvation!"*

The predominance of the middle classes had been a marked feature of France's history since 1789. Noting this, Guizot eulogised the bourgeoisie, but he clearly saw the frightful danger that threatened its rule. "And now a third combatant has entered the lists. The democratic element has split up. Against the middle classes there have been set the working classes; against the bourgeoisie—the people. And this new war is also to the death, because the new challenger is ... exclusive as the others have never been able to be."**

The proletariat threatens to do away with the domination of the "middle classes"; the "middle classes" are afraid of the proletariat, so their theoreticians are preaching *peace*. Firm peace, however, can be concluded only when the proletariat ceases from disputing the bourgeoisie's right to existence. That was something that Guizot was very well aware of, so he set about proving that all the classes existing in France were "natural and deep elements of French society",*** and went on to assert that recognition of the justice of that idea by all the combatant parties would be a big step forward towards social peace. Indeed, by recognising the justice of the idea, the proletariat would be recognising the "*naturalness*" of its thralldom, which was precisely what the alarmed ideologist of the bourgeoisie was after.

Guizot was not alone in preaching social peace or in changing his attitude towards the class struggle after the new "combatant" had entered the lists. We have seen how Mignet looked upon the "disturbances" of the Paris Commune. As for Augustin Thierry, his frame of mind after 1848 was displayed in the Preface to his *Essai sur l'histoire du tiers-état*, which came out in 1853. The history of the third estate was one of a social war waged by the middle class against the aristocracy. As we know, Augustin Thierry was one of the first to draw the attention of the reading public to the class character of that war, to deny it would have meant stripping the history of the third estate of all its significance. On the other hand, however, Thierry could not in 1853 speak of the class struggle without serious reservations, which he did make.

* *De la Démocratie en France*, Paris, 1849, p. 35.

** *ibid.*, p. 107.

*** *ibid.*, p. 105.

He remarked that the class struggle dealt with in his book had nothing in common with the proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie. The struggle he described had been beneficial in its consequences, and conducted for whole centuries, while the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie had been born "only yesterday and destructive to all public security". He considered the proletariat's class interest *narrow*, and that of the third estate very *broad*, since the latter included the entire nation but the nobility and the clergy.

This kind of reasoning is highly characteristic in the psychological sense although, as we shall now see, the adherents of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie would have little difficulty in refuting Augustin Thierry with his own arguments.

So profoundly were the French historians of the Restoration period convinced of the historical significance of the class struggle that they resumed their former language. As an instance, we shall again refer to Guizot.

In 1858, he brought out his *Mémoires*, the first volume of which dealt with the time when, with the ardour of youth, he came out for the class struggle of the middle class against the aristocracy. Regarding his booklet *Du gouvernement de la France*, which, as we already know, was an impassioned call for that struggle, Guizot acknowledged that, on re-reading it thirty-six years after its publication, he gained the following impression: "On considering things thoroughly and in themselves, both as historian and as philosopher, I find nothing in it to retract. I persist in thinking that the general ideas in it are correct, the great social facts well appraised, the politicians well understood and depicted with truth.... But ... I have demanded too much of men."

His scientific integrity gaining the upper hand over his fear of the new "combatant", the aged theoretician of the bourgeoisie no longer looked upon the class struggle as France's shame and calamity: he asserted that the social facts had been correctly appraised in *Du gouvernement*, that meaning that social war—the struggle of classes—*had made the history of France*. By making so frank a statement, Guizot revealed far more respect for scientific truth than do all present-day "scholars", who eschew any mention of the class struggle with the same zeal as, following the counsel of the Apostle Paul, Christians should avoid all and any talk on the "abominations" the Seventh Commandment forbids.

Thus there was a time when the bourgeoisie had an excellent understanding of the historical role of the class struggle. If they do not understand it today, or pretend not to, and if they now preach "social peace", that is very well accounted for by the further history of bourgeois society and its fear of the new "combatant". Since today's theoreticians of the bourgeoisie willingly hold

forth on the theme of "social peace", and castigate the Social-Democrats for their preaching the class struggle, the latter can well reply in the way Guizot once retorted to the theoreticians of the aristocracy: "Effete descendants of a race that dominated a great country and made kings tremble, you have disowned your ancestors and your history!" And, like Guizot, we have every right to express scoffing surprise at our enemies having grown too humble in their recollections, and to ask them ironically: "What? You are commanding us to forget our history because its conclusions have not been in your favour!"

And how should one understand those socialists who, behind a cover of a criticism of Marxism, would play down the significance of the class struggle and, like His Excellency M. le ministre Millerand, declare that the workers should not be set against the bourgeoisie? Let us leave that to the reader's judgement.

Socialism can stand on no other basis today than that of the class struggle. But that was not always so. Whilst it was in its infancy, its adherents were also prepared to deplore the class struggle as the shame and calamity of mankind, an attitude that seemed to be in contradiction with the above-mentioned views of Saint-Simon. It should not be forgotten, however, that it was the *industrialists'* struggle against the *feudal lords* that Saint-Simon invariably spoke of, and not the *proletariat's* struggle *against the bourgeoisie*. To Saint-Simon, the proletariat did not exist as a class capable of playing an independent role in history. In his *Geneva Letters*, he told the "non-propertyed", that, by taking over power during the revolution, they had been able to create nothing but *famine*. In his *Du Système industriel*, he tried to induce the bourgeoisie to accept his views, by frightening them with the working class, in whose midst the ideas of equality ("Turkish equality", as he put it) could, in his words, assume an extensive significance that was injurious to civilisation.* He saw the bourgeois *entrepreneurs* as the workers' natural leaders. It was with good reason that the authors of the *Manifesto* said that the founders of utopian systems already saw "the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements, in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement."²¹³ True to that view, the utopian socialists addressed themselves, not to the proletariat but to all contemporary society. Thus, in his lectures on industry delivered in the Paris Atheneum in 1831, Jacob-Emile Pereire categorically declared on behalf of the Saint-Simonists that, as "men of progress", they wished to save all mankind, "not

* *Du Système industriel*, Paris, 1821, pp. 205-07.

any particular nation or class.”* Similarly, the Fourierites regarded as one of the main virtues of their teacher’s doctrine its not being an expression of a struggle of “opposing interests ... in society”.** Finally, we shall refer to Louis Blanc, who, in January 1845, wrote in the Introduction to his celebrated *Organisation du travail*: “It is to you, the rich, that this book is addressed, because it is a question of the poor. For their cause is yours.”***

Both theoretically and practically, these views of the utopian socialists were a big step backwards as against the above-mentioned views of the revolutionary bourgeoisie’s ideologists, and resulted from the undeveloped condition of capitalism at the time. Of course, they did not fail to exert an injurious influence on the workers’ class consciousness, whose development, however, they did not and could not halt. The growth of capitalism brought about both a numerical growth of the proletariat and its intellectual awakening. Already in October 1836, the Working Men’s Association, which existed in London, spoke in no uncertain terms, in its Charter, of the need for the working class to break with the parties of the ruling classes.**** On the other hand, in France, most of the membership of the secret revolutionary societies were recruited from the midst of the working class. The kind of ideas that spread among the members of such societies will be seen from the following extract from a dialogue during the enrolment of new members in the Society of the Seasons,²¹⁴ a communist society:

“Question: What are the aristocracy made up of today?

“Answer: The hereditary aristocracy were destroyed in July 1830; today the aristocracy are made up of the wealthy, who are just as rapacious an aristocracy as the former.

* *Leçons sur l'industrie*, Paris, 1832, p. 39.

** Victor Considérant, *Destinée sociale*, 3^e éd, t. II, p. 8 et seq.

*** After this, judge of the scholarship and profundity of Professor Kareyev, who has remarked in an article on *The Development of the Monist View of History*: “The author is guilty of an unpardonable error in disregarding the socialist historian Louis Blanc, who came out much earlier than Marx and in whose views we see, on the one hand, a further development of the views of Augustin Thierry and Guizot on the class struggle in history and, on the other, a further development of the ideas of Saint-Simon” (*Studies Old and New on Economic Materialism*, St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 211).

In their time, Augustin Thierry and Guizot preached the bourgeoisie’s class struggle against the nobles. In their opinion, the entire history of France showed that the third estate could win no voluntary concessions from the aristocracy. Louis Blanc insisted that the cause of the wealthy was also that of the poor, addressing his project for the organisation of labour to the bourgeoisie, not to the proletariat. Mr. Kareyev calls this a further development of the views of Thierry and Guizot regarding the class struggle in history. This testifies only to the immaturity of his own views on the class struggle and the history of socialism.

**** *Die Entstehung und die oekonomischen Grundsätze des Chartismus* von Dr. John L. Tildsley, Jena, 1898, S. 2-4.

"Question: Is it enough to overthrow the monarchy?

"Answer: Aristocrats of any kind should be destroyed, as well as every kind of privilege, for otherwise nothing will come of this.

"Question: Those who enjoy rights without performing obligations, like the aristocrats of today—do they form part of the people?

"Answer: They should not form any part. To the social body, they are like a cancer in the human body. The prime condition for the restoration of the body's health is extirpation of the cancer. The prime condition for the social body to return to a condition based on justice is the annihilation of the aristocracy," etc.*

From our present-day point of view, the practical programmes of the communist conspirators of the times were even less satisfactory than their theoretical views. Nevertheless, their firm conviction that the emancipation of the working class ("the people") was inconceivable without a struggle against the upper classes ("the aristocracy") distinguished them in the positive sense from the utopian socialists. Of course, a struggle waged by a handful of conspirators in pursuit of the people's interests can in no way be called a *class* struggle, but when the main contingent of such conspirators are drawn from the industrial workers, conspiracy becomes an *embryo* of the working class's revolutionary struggle. The view of the "aristocracy" held by the Society of the Seasons is indicative of the intimate genetic link between the ideas of the French communist revolutionaries of the time, and those of the eighteenth-century bourgeois revolutionaries and the liberal opposition of the Restoration.

We have already seen that the class interest of the proletariat seemed narrow to Augustin Thierry, and that of the third estate, broad, since that estate included the entire nation with the exception of the aristocracy. Like Augustin Thierry, the French communist revolutionaries proceeded from a consciousness of the need to combat the *aristocracy* in the interests of *the rest of society*. But they also pointed out, very correctly, that the hereditary aristocracy had yielded place to the moneyed, which was why the struggle for broad social interests should now be conducted, not against the nobility but against the bourgeoisie. Logic was evidently on their side and they were entitled to accuse their bourgeois opponents of inconsistency.

As the contradiction between the interests of the exploited and the exploiters revealed itself and developed, the consciousness of the need for the struggle between the proletariat and the

* De la Hodde, *Histoire des sociétés secrètes et du parti républicain*, Paris, 1850, p. 224.

bourgeoisie grew ever stronger. However, there were still very many utopian elements in that consciousness. The concept of the class struggle was far from achieving, in the communist and socialist literature of the forties, the degree of clarity to be seen in Guizot, for example. In this respect, bourgeois ideology was surpassed only in the *Manifesto*.

Marx and Engels's view on the class struggle, the significance of politics in that struggle, and the dependence of the state power on the ruling classes is identical with the views of Guizot and his fellow-thinkers on the matter, the only difference being that they stood for the interests of the proletariat, while the others defended the interests of the bourgeoisie.²¹⁵ There are passages in the *Manifesto* that speak in the language of Guizot's pamphlets, or, if you wish, some of Guizot's pamphlets are couched, in part, in the language of the *Manifesto*.^{*} With the latter's authors, however, the concept of the class struggle is a component of a coherent historical theory, while the historical theory of Guizot, Thierry, Mignet and other contemporary ideologists of the bourgeoisie were still lacking in completeness. All this was, of course, indicative of the vast superiority of the "social philosophy" of Marx and Engels.

We shall presently deal with that superiority, but before doing so, we must subject to criticism some "critical" remarks of certain critics of Marxism.

Here is what Herr Werner Sombart says:

"In beginning the *Communist Manifesto* with the words, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles', Karl Marx expressed one of the greatest truths that have filled our century. But he did not express the whole truth, for it is not true that the entire history of society can be reduced solely to the struggle of classes. If, in general, we would bring world history into a single formula, we shall have to say, I think, that all the history of society revolves about two *opposites*, which I shall call *social* and *national*, using the word *nationality* in its broadest sense. In its development, mankind at first gathers into societies which initially wage a mutual struggle, but that is followed by an internal struggle among their members for superior positions.... Thus we see, on the one hand, a striving towards wealth, strength and importance on the part of entire societies, and, on the other, a striving towards the same ends on the part of

* As an illustration, I shall remind the reader of a passage quoted above from Guizot's *De la Démocratie*, which was written in 1849: "The struggle between the various classes of our society has filled our history.... Nobles and third estate, aristocracy and democracy, bourgeois and workingmen...— all these have been so many forms, so many phases of the social struggle...." This is almost literally what is said in the beginning of the *Manifesto*'s opening chapter.

individual members. Such, as I see them, are the two opposites which have filled all history."*

Marx discovered only part of the truth. For his own part, that critical thinker, Herr Sombart, has complemented what Marx has said, and now we have the good fortune and pleasure of possessing the entire truth, free of all extremes and exaggerations. That is very pleasant, but, in the first place, the mutual struggle between individual members of society for superior positions is not yet a class struggle, as has been so well proved by the example of our contemporary entrepreneurs, who engage in a furious struggle among themselves to win customers, but harbour not the least thought of a *class* struggle with their own ilk. In the second place, what is meant by Herr Sombart's "national struggle"? It is nothing but a struggle between individual states. The question arises: could the authors of the *Manifesto* have lost sight of the historical significance of that struggle? That would have been strange, the more so for the authors saying, in the selfsame *Manifesto*, that the bourgeoisie of any particular country wages an incessant struggle against the bourgeoisie of other states (*Manifesto*, p. 13)²¹⁶. What, then, is the matter? It is simply that Herr Werner Sombart has poorly understood the meaning of the *Manifesto*.

In what sense does Marx use the word *society*? It is in the very same sense it is used by Guizot when he speaks of the dependence of the *political* structure on the *social*.** With both of them, the word *society* is short for what they themselves have called civil society, *as distinct from the State*. When the authors of the *Manifesto* say that the bourgeoisie of any particular country wages an incessant struggle against the bourgeoisie of other countries, they are referring to the struggle *between states, an international*, or—in the terminology of Herr Werner Sombart—a *national* struggle. When they say that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle, they mean the history of *civil society*, or, in other words, *the internal history of states*.*** That history has, in their opinion, been one of a struggle of classes, and it is in *that* respect that their "critic" agrees with them in essence. What follows, therefore, is that the amendment made by Herr Sombart is nothing more than the result of a misunderstanding.

Most frequently, Marx and Engels are "criticised" as follows: first they are somewhat misunderstood or distorted, and then somewhat amended. That is how the merciful critics act; the merciless ones act more rudely: first they ascribe absurdities to

* *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert*, S. 1-2.

** See above.

*** Cf. the introduction to *Zur Kritik*, which shows so well the significance that Marx attached to the word *society*. Cf. also *Die heilige Familie*, S. 189.²¹⁷

them, and then proceed to profoundly remark that the time has come to put an end to the Marxist "dogma".

Benedetto Croce also finds the very concept of the class struggle vague. "I shall be almost tempted to say that history is a struggle of classes: 1) when classes exist; 2) when they have antagonistic interests; 3) when they are aware of that antagonism. But that would lead us to the amusing parity that history is a class struggle only when it is ... a struggle of classes! In reality, it has happened that classes have not had antagonistic interests, and very frequently they are not even aware of them, something that is very well known to socialists who strain themselves, through efforts sometimes fruitless (with the peasants, for example, they have not even reached that stage) to arouse this awareness among the present-day proletarians."*

These remarks may seem very apt at first glance, and are therefore worthy of attention.

The class struggle takes place only where and only when classes exist. That is, of course, quite true: it would be strange to speak of the class struggle in a society in which no classes exist. But in what kind of society are they absent? Only in the very primitive kind, in which there exists a kind of balance of interests. However, that balance is unstable: already at the very early stage of development, long before the full decomposition of the clan organisation, property inequality appears among the "savages", to be followed, not only by an antagonism of interests but also by a *consciousness of that antagonism*. One of the most remarkable works of Eskimo poetry is the tale whose hero, the son of a *poor* widow, wreaks vengeance on his *rich* kinsmen for the humiliation they have caused him, this despite the keen sense of solidarity so highly developed among Eskimos as the result of their traditions of primitive communism.

It should also be remembered that primitive society saw the early inception of the division of labour between men and women, this in its turn giving rise to *sexual antagonism*, which found expression in food, customs, amusements, art, and even language. Losing sight of the material and spiritual consequences of this antagonism between the sexes leads to a failure to understand many important aspects of primitive life. A consideration of more advanced societies will show very clearly both the existence of various classes in them and an incessant struggle that is reflected in the state structure, law, religion, poetry, and all artistic creativity in general.

It is also true that the interests of various social classes are not always *opposed* to each other; however, a simple *difference* of in-

* "Critique de quelques concepts du marxisme", in *Devenir Social*, février, 1898, pp. 121-22.

terests is sufficient for class antagonism to arise. Where relations of hirers and hired have not yet been established between rich and poor, it is only that difference which is often to be seen, however, it engenders a fierce struggle between classes. There are times when property inequality is not even necessary for the inception of the class struggle, a difference between local interests being enough, as is shown by the early history of Athens, with its struggle between Diacrii, Paralii and Pedii.*²¹⁸

In stating that social classes are not invariably aware of the antagonism of interests, Signor Croce has expressed an idea that is only partly true. Let us cite from Russian history as some illustration: have there been a large number of open and large-scale peasant uprisings? In fact, there have been very few: the Razin and the Pugachev uprisings in Great Russia and the Cossack wars in Little Russia²¹⁹ filled some relatively brief periods separated from each other by more or less lengthy intervals. But what were those intervals marked by? "Social peace"? Not at all; even then, nothing was heard of social peace or of a truce at least. The "social war" did not cease even during such intervals; it merely changed in character, *from turning overt into covert*. Society continued divided into two hostile camps: on one hand, the "masters", and, on the other, the "muzhiks". Each of these two camps very clearly saw the wall of inimical sentiments, views and actions dividing it from the other. The "masters" vilified the "muzhiks", and tried to keep a tight rein on them; for their part, the "muzhiks" made mock of the "masters" and resisted their rule with all the means at their disposal. Every year, even every month, the covert war in various parts of the country would flare up into open warfare, true, limited to some small area; the muzhiks would "rebel", and the masters would "pacify" them with the military force available. Our Narodniks were right in saying that the peasants' struggle for land and liberty had pervaded all Russian history. But what else was that struggle for land and liberty but a class struggle against the landowners and the state controlled by the latter? The "muzhiks" were well aware of the oppositeness of their interests to those of the landowners; if, nevertheless, the struggle they waged cannot be called a *conscious class struggle*, that is only because an awareness of antagonistic interests is insufficient for a conscious class struggle; what is also needed is an understanding of the ways of defeating those who are defending those opposite interests. It is common knowledge that the Russian peasantry were not distinguished by that knowledge, which was

* See *Griechische Geschichte* von E. Curtius, I.B., Berlin, 1857, S. 254-55. Cf. Hegel's *Philosophie der Geschichte*, (herausgegeben von E. Gans), S. 261: "Der Unterschied der Stände beruht auf der Verschiedenheit der Localität".

why the struggle they conducted was in considerable degree a "spontaneous" struggle. Yet it did not cease from being a class struggle.

Signor Croce has confused a conscious struggle with a consciousness of an existing antagonism, which is why he thinks that no class struggle exists at all where there is no *conscious* class struggle. He fails to understand that a more or less bitter, overt or covert, conscious or unconscious class struggle is an invariable consequence of the division of society into classes.

Finally, it is also true that today's socialists are doing everything in their power to develop the workers' class consciousness. We cannot, however, understand how Signor Croce can cite this indisputable fact as an argument against the doctrine of the class struggle. Of the present-day socialists, one can say in the words of the *Manifesto* that they "are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only.... In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole."²⁰ From this it only follows that not all workers are marked by the same degree of class consciousness and not all of them understand the overall interests of the labour movement equally well.

The division of society into classes is caused by its economic development. However, the course of *ideas* lags behind the course of *things*; that is why *people's awareness* of the relations existing between them in the social process of production lags behind the *development* of those relations. Besides, even within one and the same class, consciousness does not develop at one and the same rate: some of its members grasp the essence of a given order of things sooner than others do, this making it possible for the advanced elements ideologically to influence those that are backward, and for socialists to influence those proletarians that have not yet achieved a socialist world-outlook.* Signor Croce evidently wishes to say that class consciousness is non-existent wherever it has to be developed. In the first place, however, the development of that consciousness is not yet proof of its absence. In the second place, even were it now possible to meet workers who still believe in the harmony of their interests with those of the employers, it would be necessary to say of such workers that they have not yet cast off a world-outlook characteristic of the class struggle of another kind—the struggle between the third estate and the aristocracy. The third estate had not yet become aware of the economic antagonism lurking within its own midst. There is nothing surprising in views evolved in times of a class struggle of one kind

* That this impact is on the whole being achieved with a considerable degree of success is shown by the universal growth of socialist parties.

surviving in part till our day, a period marked by a class struggle of another kind: after all, the development of consciousness lags behind the development of the economy.

Hence, wherever one's glance falls in present-day society, one sees the influence of the class struggle. It also follows that it is no one else but Signor Croce himself who has advanced "amusing" parity.

Though Signor Croce is an intelligent and capable man, his thinking is lacking in the dialectical element, a shortcoming that accounts for almost all the reverses that have attended his "critical" efforts.*

But let us go further: we have already pointed out that the authors of the *Manifesto* possessed a most harmonious theory of history, while the historical views of the bourgeoisie's ideologists have lacked the necessary coherence. We must now explain and prove that statement.

Augustin Thierry, Mignet, Guizot and other historians who held the viewpoint of the interests of the "middle class" saw property relations as the main and deepest foundation of a country's political structure and even of the views predominant in it.**

* We shall note, incidentally, that to identify the "peasants" with the "proletarians of recent times" is most strange in a man with quite a good acquaintance with the literature on the subject.

** If this Introduction falls into the hands of the learned Professor Kareyev, he will certainly exclaim with reference to us as he has done in respect of another author:²²¹ "And this is being said of Guizot, who recognised so important a role for individual development! It is being said of Augustin Thierry with his theory of races, which has played so important a role in explaining events." (*Studies Old and New*, p. 209.) The learned professor's exclamations, however, stem from his ignorance of the matter. Guizot did, indeed, ascribe considerable importance to individual development, but with him that development figures as a desirable consequence of social development, not as one of its main causes. As for Thierry, his historical theory attaches considerable importance, not to "races" but to the conquest of one race by another. What is the aim pursued by conquests? To this question Thierry would have unhesitatingly replied: for the sake of positive (property) interests. That, at least, is the reply given in his celebrated book *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*. Let us recall the following passage. Just before the Battle of Hastings, one of the Angles said: "We must fight because this is not a matter of a new ruler to be accepted and taken ... this is a matter of quite a different kind.... The Norman has given our lands to his captains, his knights and all his men.... If the Duke becomes our king, he himself will be obliged to let them have our property, our wives and our daughters." For his part, William the Conqueror said to his soldiers: "Think of fighting well and put them all to death, for if we vanquish, we shall all be rich. What I shall gain, you will gain too; if I conquer, you will conquer too; if I take the land, you will have it." (See p. 300 in Volume I of the Paris edition of 1825.) Mr. Kareyev's objections to "economic materialism" are so full of misunderstandings and so empty of content that they remind one of Proudhon's words: "Il faut qu'un professeur parle, parle, parle non pas pour dire quelque chose, mais pour ne pas rester muet."

In this respect, their views differ but little from those of Marx and Engels, and when Marx later wrote that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel called civil society,* he was merely repeating the conclusions that historical science had arrived at before him, under the influence of social development and the class struggle connected with it. The entire difference boiled down to Marx's predecessors having failed to ascertain the origin of property relations and interests, while Marx gained a complete understanding of them.

With Guizot, Mignet and Thierry, as well as with all historians and publicists who shared their point of view, property relations in society were often attributed to *conquests*. They themselves, however, pointed out that conquests are effected for the sake of definite "*positive interests*". But where do such interests come from? Their existence is clearly conditioned by the property relations both in the country of the conquerors and in the country that comes under their yoke. What we have is a vicious circle: property relations and interests are the outcome of conquests, while conquest is explained by property relations and interests. While historical theory was confined to this vicious circle, it could not but be marked by eclecticism and contradictions. In general, these contradictions are numerous in all historians belonging to the trend under examination.

The historians sometimes appealed to human nature. However, one of two things is possible: human nature must remain immutable throughout the historical process, or else undergo change. If it remains immutable, it is obvious that it cannot account for the changes taking place in history. If, on the other hand, it undergoes change, then references to it can explain nothing, since we must first of all establish the causes of the changes within it. That leads us into another vicious circle and another source of contradictions and eclecticism in historical science.

An excellent example of such eclecticism and contradictions is provided by Tocqueville's celebrated book *De la démocratie en Amérique*, which Royer-Collard called a continuation of Montesquieu's book *On the Spirit of Laws*. Tocqueville says that if we have a definite social structure, it may be regarded as the prime cause of most of the laws, customs and ideas "determining the behaviour of nations". To understand the legislations and manners of a given people, one should begin with a study of the social system**;

* Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Vorwort.²²²

** See *De la démocratie en Amérique*, Paris, 1836, t. I, p. 74.

but where does a social system come from? In reply, Tocqueville refers to human nature. We already know that such references can explain nothing. This was something that was known to or at least suspected by Tocqueville himself, who wrote in his letter from America: "I see prospering here institutions that would inevitably turn France upside down ... people are neither different nor better than in our country."*

The inevitable and inescapable conclusion to be drawn from these words is that human nature provides no key to an understanding of American institutions.

Elsewhere Tocqueville tried to ascribe the origins of social systems to the operation of *laws*. However, since, in his own words, a country's legislation stems from its social system, we again come up against a contradiction. Tocqueville himself was more or less vaguely aware of that contradiction and tried to eliminate it, but all his efforts were in vain: his analysis proved powerless in this respect.

Marx's historical theory solved this contradiction, thereby bringing clarity and consistency into an area that contained many important particulars, profound thoughts and true remarks, but lacked a fundamental principle capable of bringing all these important particulars, profound thoughts and true remarks together into a coherent whole.

In Marx's theory a social system—men's social relations—is explained by their *economic relations*: "the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy."²²³ But how are such relations created? If Marx had attempted to ascribe their origin to human views, sentiments or "nature" in general, he would have fallen into the same contradictions that his precursors were involved in. However, Marx gave a quite different explanation.

To live, people must produce, To produce, they must pool their efforts in a certain way and establish with one another certain relations which Marx called production relations. The totality of these relations constitutes society's *economic structure*, on whose basis all other (social) relations develop, as, incidentally, do all "*people's conditions* [l'état des personnes]" which played so important a part in the theories of French historians of the Restoration.

In any given period, the nature of production relations is determined not by "chance" or by human "nature" but by the natural conditions in which men have to struggle for their existence. It is on these conditions, and first and foremost on the geographical environment, that the state of the *productive forces* at men's dispos-

* *Nouvelle correspondance de Alexis Tocqueville*, Paris, 1866; a letter to his father, dated June 3, 1830.

al depends. Definite production relations correspond to a definite state of the productive forces, and any particular social system corresponds to definite relations of production; the nature of that social system, which influences people's mentality, conditions the intellectual, moral and all the so-called *spiritual* development of men and women.

However, the very process of production and the pooling of human efforts in that process, by increasing the sum of experience, lead to a further development of the productive forces, as a result of which there arises and gradually increases a *discrepancy* between those forces on the one hand, and the production relations on the other. Those relations previously fostered the further growth of the productive forces, but now they begin to hold it back. There then sets in a *revolutionary epoch* in social development, which sooner or later ends in the destruction of obsolete production and consequently property relations, and all "l'état des personnes".

The struggle against outmoded production relations makes people develop a critical attitude, not only towards the old social order but also to those ideas, sentiments and, in general, the "*mentality*" evolved on the basis of the old order. To the revolutionary movement in the area of social relations there corresponds a revolutionary movement in the sphere of spiritual life. "Does it require deep intuition," ask Marx and Engels in Chapter Two of the *Manifesto*, "to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

"What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed?"²²⁴

Such is the historical theory of Marx and Engels. It is a theory that pervades the entire *Manifesto* and comprises what can well be called its fundamental idea.

It is from the viewpoint of this fundamental idea that the authors of the *Manifesto* appraised their own times as well. If they considered it *revolutionary*, it was for the sole reason that they saw the discrepancy between the productive forces created by capitalism and the production relations inherent in capitalism. "Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property," they wrote, "a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions

for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society." (*Manifesto*, p. 8.)²²⁵

Since bourgeois production relations make the workers intolerably dependent on capital, there is nothing surprising in the emergence, among the workers, of a sense of dissatisfaction, which grows together with the growth of the contradiction we have spoken of, and develops into a revolutionary movement that is directed against the entire present social order. The bourgeoisie has "not only forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the *proletarians*." (*Ibid.*, p. 9.)²²⁶

All this shows how incorrectly the historical theory of Marx and Engels is characterised by the generally accepted term *economic materialism*. If that denoted a theory that recognises property interest as the main driving force in historical progress, then the French historians of the Restoration period may well be called economic materialists. But these "economic materialists" were, in fact, wholly devoid of materialism, for they remained *idealists*, inasmuch as they did not turn into eclectics. With them, the origin of property relations and interests did not get any kind of materialist explanation. If, on the other hand, Marx's theory was imbued with materialism, it was not at all because it attributed an extraordinarily important historical role to property interests; it was because, by tying the development of those interests to the development of the productive relations caused by the growth of the productive forces, it provided for the first time a materialist explanation of the evolution of social thought, and completely eliminated the idealist explanation of that evolution as deriving from the properties of the human "spirit" or human "nature" in general. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the *semi-Marxists*, who have rebelled against *materialism*, clutching at the expression "*economic materialism*".

They realise that absolutely idealistic views may lie concealed behind that expression.*

Herr Eduard Bernstein, that former Marxist and Social-Democrat, finds that the historical theory of Marx and Engels is most clearly defined by a title proposed by Barth: *the economic understanding of history*. After all that has been said, it is superfluous to say that this opinion of the esteemed "critic" is based exclusively

* Here is an excellent example: Saint-Simon's historical view had an idealistic foundation, yet he, as we have already seen, was an economic materialist no less than Mignet, Guizot or Augustin Thierry.

on a complete failure to understand the true nature of the theory he makes so bold as to criticise.*

Since we have begun to deal with this "critic", we shall remind the reader that, in his opinion, the historical theory of Marx and Engels has itself gone through a process of development, as a result of which there has emerged a certain limiting of the role of the economic "factor" in history, in favour of other, *non-economic* "factors". Herr Bernstein cites the following arguments to bolster this opinion of his. In 1859, Marx, writing in the Preface to his *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, "recognised as the determining factor the given material productive forces** and production relations of man", while later, in his polemic with Dühring, Engels, "even in Marx's life-time and in agreement with him", gave another "explanation" to historical materialism, namely: "It is indicated there that the *ultimate**** causes of all social changes and revolutions should be sought, not in people's minds but in changes in the mode of production and exchange. Ultimate causes, however, do not preclude simultaneously operating causes of another kind—causes of the second, third and other degrees—and it is clear that the more considerable is the series of such changes, the greater the restrictive force of ultimate causes is limited both qualitatively and quantitatively. The fact of their influence remains, but the final shape of things does not depend on it alone."****

Herr Bernstein thinks that "in his later works Engels still more limited the determining force of production relations". As proof, he cites two letters from Engels, published in *Sozialistischer Akademiker* of October 1895, one of them written in 1890, and the other in 1894. The contents of these letters are very well characterised by the two excerpts from them provided by Herr Bernstein.

The first of them reads as follows: "Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one *resultant*—the historical event. This may again itself be viewed as the product of a power which works as a whole, unconsciously and without volition. For what each indi-

* Herr Bernstein asserts that "the doctrine of the class struggle rests on the foundation of the materialist understanding of history" («Условия возможности социализма», Лондон, 1900, стр. 17, [Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus]). The reader now knows that the doctrine of the class struggle is possible not only on the foundation of the materialist understanding of history. But what does that matter to Herr Bernstein? He does not do any studying; he merely "criticises".

** The Russian translator of Herr Eduard Bernstein has used the term "production forces" instead of "productive forces" (*ibid.*, p. 6). That is utterly meaningless.

*** Instead of "final" causes the Russian translator has said "ultimate causes", which is completely out of place in Marx's theory.

**** *ibid.*, p. 9.

vidual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed." (Letter of 1890.)²²⁷

In the second excerpt, we read the following: "Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis." (Letter of 1895).²²⁸

Regarding these excerpts, Herr Bernstein makes the following remark: "The reader will agree that this sounds somewhat different from the passage from Marx quoted at the beginning."*

"At the beginning", he has cited a passage from the celebrated Preface to *Zur Kritik*, which says that the mode of production of material life conditions the process of social, political and intellectual life. Let us assume for a moment that this passage does indeed "sound" different from the above-mentioned excerpt from Engels's letter, and ascertain how the *Manifesto*, which was written eleven years prior to the appearance of *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, does actually "sound".

We have already drawn the reader's attention to the fact of the development of the productive forces being recognised there as the most profound cause of social development. In this respect, the viewpoint of the *Manifesto* is *identical* with that in the Preface to *Zur Kritik*. But how does the matter stand with the "parallelograms of forces" and with the interplay of various "factors" of social development?

The *Manifesto* shows how the successes scored by the bourgeoisie in the economic area brought it into the political struggle and led to political gains which, in their turn, laid the foundations of its further achievements in the economic field. It declares that *any class struggle is a political struggle*²²⁹ and tells the proletariat that its seizure of *political* power is an essential condition of its *economic* emancipation. In brief, what we read here about the political "factor" is actually the same as was pointed out in Engels' letter of 1895. Political development rests on the economic development but at the same time reacts to the economic basis.

What follows is that the view which to Herr Bernstein seems a fairly late result of the evolution of Marx and Engels's historical theory was in fact expressed as far back as 1848, i.e., at a time when, according to Herr Bernstein's hypothesis, Marx and Engels should have been—if we may put it so here—"pure economists".

This, however, follows as yet only in respect of the political "factor"; perhaps it is wrong in respect of other "factors"?

Let us see. The *Manifesto* says that intellectual activities change together with the material ones: "When the ancient world was in

* *ibid.*

its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the eighteenth century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie."²³⁰ These words in themselves contain a recognition of the interaction between society's economic development, on the one hand, and its intellectual development, on the other. However, it is still a tacit recognition, which is why it may be questioned. But the concluding chapter of the *Manifesto* leaves absolutely no room for doubt on this score. In this chapter, which shows the Communists' attitude to other working-class parties, the authors say that the Communists never cease, for a single instant, to instil in the workers the clearest possible consciousness of the hostile oppositeness of the bourgeoisie's interests and those of the proletariat. Why do the Communists do so? Obviously, because they recognise the significance of *ideas*. Incidentally, the authors themselves hasten to explain their purpose. What the Communist Party wants, they write, is that "the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin."²³¹ This passage reveals absolutely the same view regarding the significance of the *intellectual* "factor" that we have noted in respect of the *political* "factor"; intellectual development is based on the economic, but then, in its turn, influences the latter (through the medium of men's socio-political activities). It follows, then, that the ideological "factor" was recognised by Marx and Engels, not only during the polemic with Dühring but as far back as 1848 and even earlier, during the period of the publication of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. This, at least in respect of Marx, precludes any doubt regarding the following outstanding lines from his article on the Hegelian philosophy of law.

"No class ... can play this role without arousing a moment of enthusiasm in itself and in the masses, a moment in which it fraternises ... with society in general ... is perceived and acknowledged as its *general representative*; a moment in which its demands and rights are truly the rights and demands of society itself; a moment in which it is truly the social head and the social heart."²³²

As you see, the part played by consciousness in transforming society, in general, and even by enthusiasm in particular is recognised in the most categorical terms. The "factor" of mentality reacts to social (and consequently to economic) relations. Marx then goes on to explain how the attitude of all society to the "emancipator class" develops on the basis of the class struggle: "For one estate to be *par excellence* the estate of liberation, another

estate must conversely be the obvious estate of oppression. The negative general significance of the French nobility and the French clergy determined the positive general significance of the immediately adjacent and opposed class of the *bourgeoisie*.”*

The conclusion to be drawn is that from the very outset of their activities the founders of scientific socialism voiced absolutely the same view of the mutual relationship between various “factors” of historical development as we meet in the excerpts made by Herr Bernstein from Engels’s letters of the nineties. It could not have been otherwise: had Marx and Engels, from the very start of their political careers, not attached importance to the political and the “intellectual” factors and precluded their impact on the economic development of society, their practical programme would have been quite different: they would not have said that the working class cannot cast off the economic yoke of the bourgeoisie without taking over the political power. In exactly the same way, they would not have spoken of the need to foster class consciousness in the workers: why should that consciousness be developed if it plays no part in the social movement and if everything takes place in history irrespective of the consciousness, and exclusively through the force of economic necessity? And who does not know that the development of the workers’ class-consciousness was the immediate practical task of Marx and Engels from the very outset of their social activities? As a former “Marxist”, Herr Bernstein ought also to know that the intense intellectual work carried on in the early forties among the French and British workers served Marx as one of the main arguments against those writers who, like Bruno Bauer, ignored the “masses” and pinned all their hopes on “critically minded personalities”.**

Let us try to construct another hypothesis: in the beginning of their activities, Marx and Engels regarded “factors” in the same light as they were seen in by Engels in the nineties. Midway through those activities, at about the time of the publication of *Zur Kritik*, Marx—alone, or together with Engels—changed this viewpoint for some reason, and fell into the extreme discovered by Herr Bernstein in the Preface to this book.

But even this hypothesis will not stand up to any criticism, because the Preface just mentioned contains that very view of “factors” which, in Herr Bernstein’s opinion, arose only in consequence of the *evolution* of Marx’s historical theory. The reader will have no difficulty in agreeing with us if he goes to the trouble of scrutinising the quotation that our profoundly thinking “critic” makes reference to: “The mode of production of material life

* *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, S. 82.²³³

** *Die heilige Familie*, S. 125.

conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life", which means that social, political and intellectual "factors" grow on economic soil.

Further: "At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or ... with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution."²³⁴

Property relations pertain to the realm of *law*. At a definite time, certain property relations promote the development of the productive forces. That means that the legal forms that have evolved on a definite economic basis in their turn react to the development of the economy. Then—and, incidentally, as a result of that reaction—there comes a time when the given legal forms begin to hamper the development of the productive forces. That again means that these forms are reacting—though this time in the opposite sense—to the development of the socio-economic relations. As a consequence of the contradiction between the productive forces and property relations, an epoch of social revolution sets in. *What* is achieved by that revolution? *What kind* of purpose does it pursue? The elimination of the old production relations and the establishment of new relations, and new legal institutions. What is the aim of that elimination and that establishment? It is the further development of the productive forces. That means again and again that, in their turn, the legal forms that have arisen on a given economic foundation affect the latter. Is this not exactly what was said in the *Manifesto*, was repeated in almost all of Marx's other writings, and was referred to in Engels's letters quoted by Herr Bernstein?

And the "factor" of mentality? Perhaps, the Preface does not say about it what is set forth in Marx and Engels's other writings. Very little is said about it in the Preface, but what is said there in no way contradicts what Engels's letters have to say on that score. The development of the productive forces places people in certain relations of production and leads to the appearance of certain legal forms. To those legal forms there correspond certain legal notions in people. With the further development of the productive forces and in the measure in which their condition ceases from being in keeping with the old legal forms, those whose interests are infringed by that discrepancy begin to feel doubt as to the fitness and justice of the old legal institutions. New notions

* «Условия возможности социализма», стр. 6. [Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus]. We have cited this passage with the necessary corrections in the horrible Russian translation.

of law and justice appear in keeping with the newly-achieved social stage of the development of the productive forces. Towards these new notions of law and justice are directed the practical activities of the fighters against the old order, this leading to the creation of new legal institutions which give a fresh impetus to the development of the productive forces, and so on and so forth. That is what is said in the Preface, and we would ask the unprejudiced reader whether this contradicts by one jot what Engels said in his letters.

Of course, there is no contradiction there, but the Preface is couched in more abstract language and deals with quite another matter. In it, Marx wished to emphasise that social relations could not be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind.²³⁵ To that end, he brought to the fore the *economic foundation* of the development of those relations. For his part, Engels, in his letters, addressed himself to one who, like many of our compatriots, thought that the theory of "economic materialism" has no room for the operation of political, legal and spiritual "factors" and therefore, while making passing mention of the economic foundations of all these "factors", he laid special stress on the circumstance that the latter, which had developed on the economic foundation, affected that foundation. That is all. Were Herr Bernstein capable of seeing just a little beyond the *wording* of the theory he is analysing, and of penetrating into its *contents*, he would find it much easier to understand that the historical views set forth in the Preface to *Zur Kritik* leave exactly the same amount of room for the operation of "causes of the second, third, etc., degrees" as the doctrine contained in *Anti-Dühring*, while Engels's argument, contained in his letter of 1890, to the effect that historical events can be regarded as a product of an unconsciously operating force, is the very same that Marx says in the Preface regarding the operation of the fundamental cause of social development, irrespective of human consciousness and will. Here we have complete identity, yet Herr Bernstein has far-fetchedly understood Engels's words as something that changes the meaning of the Preface and complements it. Some "criticism"!

Elsewhere in his booklet, our "critic" speaks of Marx having allegedly made an excessive appraisal of the "creative ability of revolutionary force to effect socialist transformation in present-day society". But a revolutionary force is also a political one. What follows is that Marx was guilty of an exaggerated appraisal of the creative capacity of the political force. But the selfsame Marx, at the same time and according to that selfsame "critic", was guilty of attaching no significance at all to any other "factors" except the economic. What is one to make of that?

Herr Bernstein criticises, not only the historical theory of Marx and Engels but also their doctrine of the class struggle. In his words, the class struggle no longer confronts the proletariat with the practical tasks indicated by the authors of the *Manifesto*. The proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie of the most developed countries in the civilised world cannot at present lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is why talk about the latter becomes simple phrase-mongering. But let Herr Bernstein speak for himself:

"Is there, for instance, any sense in repeating the phrase of the proletarian dictatorship at a time when, in all kinds of institutions, representatives of Social-Democracy are in practice taking up the stand of parliamentary struggle, proportional representation and popular legislation, which are contradictory to dictatorship? It is at present so much outlived that it cannot be brought into accord with reality otherwise than deleting its true meaning from the word 'dictatorship' and giving it some milder meaning."*

In the second half of the eighties, there appeared in our country a special brand of "socialist" whose main and, it may be said, agonising concern consisted in refraining from frightening the liberals. The spectre of the frightened liberals so greatly intimidated that brand of socialists that it brought confusion into all their theoretical and practical arguments. Herr Bernstein reminds one very much of such "socialists". His main concern consists in not frightening the democratic bourgeoisie. If he rejects materialism and recommends a return to Kant, it is solely because Kantianism leaves room for religious superstition, and Herr Bernstein is unwilling to shock the religious superstitions of today's bourgeoisie. If Herr Bernstein has rebelled against the materialist doctrine of necessity, it is solely because, as applied to social phenomena, that doctrine leaves no room for the proletariat's hopes of good will from the bourgeoisie, and consequently of the convergence of these two classes. Finally, if Herr Bernstein dislikes the "phrase" on the proletarian dictatorship, that again is solely because it is offensive to the hearing of even the most "democratic" bourgeoisie. However, to those who have no fear of the spectre of the frightened bourgeoisie, the question of the proletarian dictatorship is seen in a light quite different from that our critic sees it in.

As even Mignet was aware in his time, the dictatorship of a class means the *supremacy* of that class, which permits it to dispose of society's organised force to defend its own interests and to directly

* "Условия возможности социализма", стр. 158. [Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus].

or indirectly suppress all those social movements which infringe those interests.* In that sense, it may be said, for instance, that the French bourgeoisie achieved its dictatorship as far back as the times of the first Constituent Assembly, and, with certain intervals, has continued enjoying that dictatorship down to our days when even M. Millerand, styled a socialist minister by M. Jaurès, is unable to prevent the shooting down of workers who have dared to disobey the capitalists. In this situation, it is the primary task of the French proletariat to eliminate the "conditions for the possibility" of that bourgeois dictatorship. Among the most important of these conditions is the insufficient class consciousness of producers, most of whom are still under the influence of the exploiters. Therefore, one of the most important practical tasks of the party consists in educating the uneducated, prodding the backward, and helping to develop the underdeveloped. Parliamentary or any other legal political activities by representatives of Social-Democracy promote the accomplishment of this important task and therefore *deserve every respect and approval*. Their good feature is that they eliminate the spiritual "conditions for the possibility" of bourgeois dictatorship, and create the spiritual "conditions for the possibility" of the future proletarian dictatorship. They do not contradict the proletarian dictatorship, but prepare for it. To describe as a *phrase* any call upon the workers to prepare for the dictatorship of their class is something to be expected only of one who has lost all idea of the "*ultimate aim*" (Endziel) and thinks only of the "movement" (Bewegung) ... towards bourgeois socialism.

But, in Herr Bernstein's words, class dictatorship pertains to a lower culture, "and ... one should recognise as a backward step, as political atavism, any thought that claims that the transition from capitalist to socialist society should inevitably take place in the form of the development of an epoch unfamiliar or imperfectly familiar with present-day methods of propaganda and the passage of laws, and, besides, has lacked the appropriate bodies".**

As we have pointed out, the dictatorship of any class means its supremacy, which permits it to dispose of the organised force of society to defend its interests and suppress all social movements that directly or indirectly threaten those interests. It may be asked whether a striving to such supremacy on the part of any class in present-day society can be called political atavism? No, it

* We would ask the reader to recall the Mignet proposition cited above: "It is common knowledge that a force which has won domination always gains control of institutions." When a class "gains control of the institutions", its dictatorship sets in.

** *ibid.*, p. 159.

cannot. *Classes* exist in that society, and where classes exist, a *class struggle* is inevitable. Wherever a class struggle takes place, it is *necessary and natural for each of the struggling classes to strive for complete victory over its enemy and its complete subjugation*. The bourgeoisie and its ideologists may—in the name of “morality” and “justice”—condemn that striving whenever the proletariat reveals it with perceptible force. We know that, already in January 1849, Guizot described the class struggle as France’s shame and calamity. But we also know that such condemnation of the class struggle and the working class’s striving towards conquest was impressed on the bourgeoisie only by its instinct of self-preservation, and that it saw the class dictatorship in quite a different light while it was waging its century-old struggle against the aristocracy, and was firmly convinced that no storm could sink its vessel. The working class cannot and should not be impressed by the alleged morality and justice the bourgeois call for in times of decline.* Mignet said that recognition of one’s rights can be won only by force and that till now there exists no overlord but force. This was most true during the times of the third estate’s struggle against the aristocracy, and it remains most true in our times of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Were we to assure the workers that, in bourgeois society, force no longer has the importance it enjoyed under the “ancien régime”, we would be telling a patent and flagrant untruth, which, like any untruth, would only increase and lengthen the “birth pangs”.

True, *force* and *violence* are not one and the same thing. In international political relations, the importance of any state is determined by its strength, but it does not follow therefrom that recognition of the right of the strongest in each particular instance presupposes violence. It is the same in the relations *between classes*. The importance of any given class is always determined by its *strength*, but it is far from always that *violence* is necessary for its significance to be recognised. The role of violence is sometimes

* That is the more so because the proletarian dictatorship will put an end to the existence of classes and consequently to their struggle, with all the inevitable sufferings it brings about. But that is something the bourgeoisie will not and cannot understand because of its social position. It worked for dictatorship and found it a necessary and quite permissible means of achieving its aims during its struggle against the aristocracy. However, it began to condemn that means and find it superfluous as soon as the question arose of the dictatorship of the working class. This reminds us of the savage who distinguishes between good and evil as follows: “When I take something away from others, that is good, but when something is taken away from me, that is bad.” Much good will is needed to find convincing, as Herr Bernstein does, the arguments of the bourgeoisie, with its fear of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

greater and sometimes less, according to the political structure of a particular country. Herr Bernstein thinks that, in the democratic countries of today, the working class has no need of violence for the achievement of its aims. This is an excessively optimistic view implanted in our "critic" by his constant concern to avoid frightening the bourgeois democrats. Present-day France has a democratic constitution, yet no one familiar with that country's internal life can guarantee that its proletariat will not be compelled to use naked force to resist violence on the part of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, anyone familiar with the French constitution will say that the very logic of that country's electoral law can easily lead to an insurrection by the proletariat.* Or else let us take the United States of America, which is also a democratic country. But in that democratic country, the emancipation of the Negroes could be achieved only at the cost of an internecine struggle, and no one can guarantee that the American proletariat will not have to clear the way for its economic emancipation *by violence*. In Herr Bernstein's opinion, "any practical Social-Democratic activities consist in establishing circumstances and conditions that will make possible and necessary the transition from today's social system to a higher one, without any convulsions".** There is some truth in these words. Social-Democracy is indeed interested in the transition to a higher social order taking place without any convulsions. But does that mean that it should give up the idea of the proletarian dictatorship? Not at all! When they took over Peking, the allied European-US-Japanese troops were most interested in the occupation of the Chinese capital being carried out without any bloodshed, yet they did not for a moment give up the idea of capturing it. No goal changes because of people trying to achieve it with the least effort, but when people are firmly resolved to achieve a given end, the choice of the means depends, not on themselves but on circumstances. And it is precisely because the Social-Democrats cannot foresee all the circumstances in which the working class will have to win its *supremacy*,*** they cannot, in principle, reject the *violent mode* of action. They should remember the old and tested maxim: if you want peace, prepare for war.

We may perhaps be told that, towards the end of his life, Engels himself strongly advised the socialist parties of all countries to avoid violent action and to remain on the platform of peaceful struggle through lawful means.**** To that we shall reply as follows:

* Cf. Jean Jaurès, "Le Socialisme français", *Cosmopolis*, janvier 1889, pp. 119-21.

** *ibid.*, p. 158.

*** We have already said why the proletariat needs that supremacy.

**** See his Introduction (dated March 1895) to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850*.

Engels gave that advice on the basis of three considerations: 1) that the socialist revolution presupposes a high level of development of the workers' class-consciousness, for which time is required;* 2) that the German conservatives are bending every effort to impel the German Social-Democrats to organise an insurrection, hoping to rout them and thereby cut short their continual successes** and 3) that the present-day equipment of the army makes any attempts at street uprisings hopeless.***

The first two of these considerations stand in need of no "amendments" or commentary. They are set forth with such clarity and justice that they can evoke objections neither from those who are really able to criticise the doctrine of Marx and Engels, nor even from those who can lay only spurious claims to criticism. But these two considerations condemn, not violent action in general but only such that is premature, which is why they have nothing in common with the arguments advanced by adherents of "peaceful development" *quand même*.

As for the third consideration, careful analysis of its meaning shows it to be different from what it may appear at first sight.

In developing this consideration Engels said that, until 1848, street fighting often led to the insurgents' victory, but that stemmed from the operation of quite different causes. In Paris in July 1830 and February 1848, and in most instances of street fighting in Spain, the outcome was decided by the National Guard, who discouraged the regular forces by their indecision or even went over to the side of the insurgents. Wherever it came out decisively and immediately against the insurrectionists, the uprisings proved abortive. That, for instance, was the case in Paris in June 1848. At any rate, the insurgents proved victorious only where and only when they were able to shake the morale of the troops. Even during the classical period of street fighting, the significance of barricades was more moral than material. By hampering the advance

* "Die Zeit der Ueberrumpelungen, der von kleinen bewussten Minoritäten an der Spitze bewusstloser Massen durchgeführten Revolutionen, ist vorbei. Wo es sich um eine vollständige Umgestaltung der gesellschaftlichen Organisation handelt, da müssen die Massen selbst dabei sein, selbst schon begriffen haben, worum es sich handelt, für was sie eintreten sollen.... Damit aber die Massen verstehen, was zu thun ist, dazu bedarf es langer, ausdauernder Arbeit", etc. (*Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, Vorwort, S. 16)²³⁶. ["The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for, body and soul.... But in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required", etc.]

** *ibid.*, S. 17.²³⁷

*** *ibid.*, S. 14-15.²³⁸

of the troops, they gave the insurgents time to affect the latter's morale. However, when the troops' morale did not succumb to insurgent influence, the military proved victorious.

If that is so, and even if, during the classical period of street fighting, the outcome of an uprising was entirely determined by the morale of the troops, then the question under consideration boils down to the following: could insurgents today exert on troops an influence favourable to them? To that question Engels replies with an emphatic "No". He says that today, insurgents could not count, as they did in 1848, on the sympathy of all strata of the population, and though more people with military training could go over to their side today, they would find it far more difficult to get suitable weapons. Adding to all this the consideration that, since 1848, new blocks have been built in the big cities that are not suited for the construction of barricades, Engels goes on to ask: "Does the reader now understand why the powers that be positively want to get us to go where the guns shoot and the sabres slash? Why do they accuse us today of cowardice, because we do not betake ourselves without more ado into the street, where we are certain of defeat in advance? Why do they so earnestly implore us to play for once the part of cannon-fodder? The gentlemen pour their prayers and their challenges for nothing, for absolutely nothing. We are not so stupid."*

All this is couched in firm language and seems to leave no doubt about Engels's view. But note that all these arguments refer to the *current position* in German Social-Democracy, which would indeed be acting most hastily by yielding to the treacherous provocations of the ruling classes. An argument which might seem to be of a general nature here receives a particular meaning; the reader begins to think that Engels was referring only to the current position in German Social-Democracy. That impression is supported considerably by Engels's following words: "But whatever may happen in other countries, the German Social-Democracy occupies a special position and therewith, at least in the immediate future, has a special task."** Further it is explained why the German party should at present find it disadvantageous to resort to violent action. That naturally leads to the assumption that the idea of the specific features of the current position in the German party gave a specific colouring to all of Engels's argument on the working class's open struggle against its exploiters. This assumption yields place to confidence when we read the passage at the end of the Introduction, where Engels says that, in view of the constant successes scored by the Social-Democrats, the German govern-

* *Die Klassenkämpfe im Frankreich*, Vorwort, S. 15.²³⁹

** *ibid.*, S. 17.²⁴⁰

ment may abolish the constitution and return to absolute rule. He is hinting here that such an attempt will lead to a popular uprising, against which the reactionary forces will be smashed. It follows therefore that, in Engels's opinion, not every popular insurrection is hopeless today. This inescapable conclusion is still more fortified by the concluding lines of the Introduction, which carry the readers' thought 1600 years back to the time when Christianity was engaged in a struggle against paganism. The pagan world cruelly persecuted the Christians as subversive elements. For a long time, they could conduct their activities only secretly, but little by little their doctrine spread to such an extent that they had supporters even among the troops: "*Entire legions adopted Christianity*" (italics ours). When their duties required their attendance at pagan ceremonies, such soldiers, imbued with the spirit of the new religion, decorated their helmets with crosses. The usual disciplinary measures proved powerless against their audacity. Emperor Diocletian launched a resolute struggle against them by issuing "anti-socialist"—sorry, "anti-Christian laws". Assemblages of subversive element were declared contrary to law; the premises they were held in were locked up, the wearing of crosses was banned, and so on and so forth. The year 303 was marked by savage persecution of Christians, but such measures proved the last of their kind. "And it was so effective that, seventeen years later, the army consisted overwhelmingly of Christians...", and Constantine declared Christianity the established religion.*

If these lines are in the least meaningful—and of course, they do not lack meaning—it is in the sense that the socialists will be triumphant when revolutionary ideas penetrate into the army and when the "legions" of today are imbued with the socialist spirit; until that time comes, the socialist party should avoid open clashes with the troops. The reader will see that this is in no way the conclusion usually drawn from this argument of Engels's.

But can socialist ideas penetrate into an army? That is not only possible but even inevitable. The present-day organisation of the military establishment calls for universal conscription, which brings into the armed forces ideas that are widespread among the people. The wider the spread of socialist ideas in the masses, the greater the insurgents' chances of success: we already know from Engels that the outcome of street fighting is always determined by the morale of the troops.**

There can be no doubt that the "legions" will not come under our influence so soon. But what has been put off is not yet lost, as the French have it. Sooner or later, socialist ideas will pene-

* *ibid.*, S. 19.²⁴¹

** We consider it necessary to note that barricades are a particular instance of the open struggle.

trate into the armed forces and then we shall see what will remain of reactionaries' bellicosity and whether they will cease from challenging us to come into the streets....

If we compare this argument of Engels's, which we have just discussed, with the celebrated concluding lines of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*,* we shall see that, towards the end of his life, Engels greatly changed his opinion regarding the role of open insurrections in the proletariat's struggle for emancipation. While, at the time of the publication of the *Manifesto*, Marx and he considered an open insurrection an essential condition of the working class's triumph, Engels admitted, towards the end of his life, that in definite circumstances, the legal road may also lead to victory; he began to regard insurrection as a mode of action which, in the present-day state of the armed forces, promises the socialists, not victory but a resounding defeat, and will continue to do so until the army itself is not imbued with the socialist spirit.

This new view of Engels's is, of course, deserving of every attention and respect; it in no way contradicts what we have said above of the possible significance of violent action in the revolutionary struggle of the working class. It merely explains the conditions required for the success of such action.**

To this it should be added that the dictatorship of a particular class is one thing, while violent action taken by that class in its striving for dictatorship is something else. During the Restora-

* "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win" (*Communist Manifesto*, p. 19).²⁴²

** In the article "Der Sozialismus in Deutschland" (*Neue Zeit*, X. Jahrg., I. B., S. 583), written in the year 1892, Engels, speaking of the rapid penetration of socialist ideas into the army, exclaimed: "...How many times have the bourgeois called upon us to renounce for all time the use of revolutionary means and to remain within the limits of legality.... *Unfortunately we are not in a position in this case to please the bourgeois*" (italics ours) "...This does not prevent us from understanding that it is not us that legality is killing at present but somebody else. It is working so well for us that it would be very foolish of us to infringe it."²⁴³ This is the same thought that we found in the Introduction; only in the latter, it was purposely given a vague wording, this on the insistence of friends who, for practical considerations, considered any clarity in it inconvenient (on this see Kautsky's article "Bernstein und Dialektik", *Neue Zeit*, XVII. Jahrg., II. B., S. 47). By following his practical friends' advice in this matter, Engels provided grounds for an erroneous theoretical interpretation of his view, an interpretation which has led to a mass of practical awkwardness far greater than all the inconveniences that might follow a clear and unambiguous exposition of his idea. This is a lesson to theorists too prone to make concessions; they should remember that where it is a question of the wording of theoretical views, men of practice are always highly impractical.

tion, Guizot and his fellow-thinkers were highly energetic and purposeful in their striving to establish the dictatorship of the "middle class", but none of them gave thought to violent action in general and to street fighting in particular. Guizot would probably have sharply condemned any plan of such an insurrection, which did not, however, prevent him from being a *revolutionary* because he did not for a minute cease from inculcating upon the minds of the "middle class" a sense of the hostile oppositeness of their interests to those of the aristocracy, and to drive home the idea that any thought of reconciliation with that class was a *harmful chimera*. Marx and Engels, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, were exactly the same kind of revolutionaries (only adhering to the viewpoint of another class); they remained the same kind of revolutionaries to the last breath. In this respect, their views did not change a jot, this despite the assertions of those "critics" who consist entirely, as Marx put it, of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand", and who would very much like to emancipate the proletariat without giving offence to the bourgeoisie, and of whom one might say, in the words of Nietzsche: "Selig sind diese Schläfrigen, denn sie sollen bald einnicken."*

That is all we have wanted to say about the fundamental idea in the *Manifesto* and the conclusions to be drawn from it. Its individual propositions will, as we have said, be examined by us in our booklet *A Critique of Our Critics*. There we shall see whether Marx and Engels *were right*, and, if so, *in what measure*, when they said that bourgeois society's productive forces have outgrown its inherent production relations, and that such a contradiction between the productive forces on the one hand, and production relations on the other is the underlying social foundation of the revolutionary movement of today's working class.

* [Happy are the drowsy for they will soon be fast asleep.]

A CRITIQUE OF OUR CRITICS

Part I

MR. P. STRUVE IN THE ROLE OF CRITIC OF THE MARXIST THEORY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE ONE

I

Nachdem eine Sache zur Klarheit gediehen ist, finden sich immer gewisse Gegner, die sogleich beflissen sind unter dem Scheine der Neuheit die Sache wieder zu verdunkeln und unklar zu machen. Ich bin dieser Art von Gegnern und Gegenreden häufig begegnet.*

Cuno Fischer

Ces messieurs font tous du Marxisme, mais de la sorte que vous avez connu en France, il y a dix ans, et dont Marx disait: tout ce que je sais, c'est que je ne suis pas marxiste, moi! Et probablement, il dirait de ces messieurs ce que Heine disait de ses imitateurs: "J'ai semé des dragons et j'ai récolté des puces."** 244

*From Frederick Engels's letter to
Paul Lafargue, Oct. 27, 1890²⁴⁴*

Mr. P. Struve has long been exercising himself in a "critique" of Marx, but until recently his "critical" exercises were not marked by any system: he confined himself, in the main, either to brief and prideful statements to the effect that he, Mr. P. Struve, was not infected with "orthodoxy" and stood "under the sign of criticism", or to laconic remarks on the theme that, in such and such a question, Marx's "orthodox" followers were in error whereas the truth emanated from the "critical" Marxists. However, brief remarks and laconic statements explained practically nothing regarding the roots of the "orthodox" Marxists' errors or the

* [As soon as some question becomes clear, opponents arise who, on the pretext of novelty, try to confuse and muddle the issue. I have often met such opponents and opposing opinions.]

** [All these gentlemen go in for Marxism, but of the kind you were familiar with in France ten years ago and of which Marx said: "All I know is that I'm no Marxist!" And of these gentlemen he would probably have said what Heine said of his imitators: "I sowed dragons and reaped fleas.]

№ 1.

Апрѣль 1901-го г.

ЗАРЯ

СОЦІАЛЬ-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКІЙ НАУЧНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКІЙ ЖУРНАЛЪ

Издается при ближайшемъ участіи

Г. В. ПЛЕХАНОВА, В. И. ЗАСУЛИЧЪ и П. Б. АКСЕЛЬРОДА.

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the first article against P. Struve

proofs of the "critics" being in the right. One could only engage in surmises on the matter, the most probable of which was that Marx and his "orthodox" followers were in error because they had not been blessed with the grace of what is known as critical philosophy, one that so brightly illuminated the world-outlook of Mr. P. Struve and his "critical" fellow-thinkers. Although this surmise may have been highly probable, the reader possessed insufficient data to verify it. We now have these essential data at our disposal, so we are now in a position, in our turn, to subject our "critic" to criticism.

In the articles we propose to offer the reader, we would like to analyse the "critical essay" published by Mr. P. Struve in *Brauns Archiv*²⁴⁵ under the title of "Die Marxsche Theorie der sozialen Entwicklung",* his review, published in the same book of the *Archiv*, of Eduard Bernstein's well-known book *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, and Kautsky's no less well-known reply to Bernstein, "Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm". This "critical essay" and this no less "critical" review are highly characteristic both of our author's devices and his mode of thinking.

In his essay, Mr. P. Struve remarks, he dealt, not so much with the materialist understanding of history in all its plenitude as with "its special application to the development from capitalism to socialism." But while his "criticism" is directed only against *part* of Marx's theory of social development, it touches, at the same time, upon *all* that theory in general and even upon some of its philosophical premises. Thus, it provides ample material for our *criticism* of the *critic*. But first let us hear what Mr. Struve has to say.

He asserts that the part of Marx's theory he is subjecting to analysis has a triple foundation, namely: 1) the theory of the development of the productive forces in capitalist society or, in other words, "the theory of the socialisation and concentration of production, and the theory of industrial anarchy in capitalist society"; 2) the theory of the deterioration of the conditions of the lower classes of society, or "the theory of the impoverishment and the theory of the expropriation of the petty capitalists by the big ones", and finally, 3) the theory of the proletariat's revolutionary role, i.e., "the theory of the socialist mission of the proletariat, which is formed by the development of capitalism and grows in the course of that development".

In his explanation of the latter theory, Mr. P. Struve goes on to add: "The proletariat is subjected to impoverishment, but at the same time achieves a social and political maturity which

* *Brauns Archiv*, XIV. Band, 5. und 6. Heft.

makes it capable of overthrowing the capitalist system through an active class struggle, and replacing it with the socialist system."

But what does our critic think of this triple foundation of Marx's theory?

While he does not take up the question of whether Marx gave a correct definition of the *relative* importance of each of these three trends, Mr. P. Struve recognises their actual existence in capitalist society of the first half of the nineteenth century; the theory of impoverishment is a simple statement of fact; the development of the productive forces was there for all to see; the proletariat's revolutionary actions, ranging from spontaneous outbursts to the communist movement, were questions of the day. However, in our critic's opinion, Marx was grossly in error in asserting that the trends he had named led to *socialism*. That assertion had no real foundation, and was simply a *utopia*.* The triumph of socialism was quite impossible as long as the impoverishment of the masses was an indisputable fact. The workers' impoverishment was incompatible with a degree of maturity in that class that would render it capable of carrying through the socialist revolution. That was why the actual state of things in the forties left no room for a social optimism to which any utopia is alien: were capitalism really doomed to collapse, there would be nobody to erect the edifice of socialism on its ruins. If, nevertheless, all pessimism was quite alien to Marx, that was due to the very groundlessness of his socio-political world-outlook. "*An imperative psychological urge to prove the historical necessity of an economic order based on collectivism*," says Mr. P. Struve, "*forced the socialist Marx, in the forties, to deduce*" (deduzieren) "*socialism from more than insufficient premises*."**

Marx subsequently substantially modified, in Mr. P. Struve's opinion, his pessimistic view of the conditions of the working class in capitalist society but did not reject it completely and quite consciously. The glaring contradiction between the impoverishment of the working class, on the one hand, and society's development towards socialism, on the other, remained beyond his purview. "This actual contradiction even acquired, in his eyes, a lawful appearance, presenting itself to him as a dialectical contradiction that was striving towards its resolution.*** In view of this strange psychological aberration, there is nothing surprising in Mr. P. Struve's seeing himself forced to turn his attention to the "doctrine of development through the growth of contradictions" (durch Steigerung der Widersprüche), and subjecting that doctrine to close analysis.

* Italics are ours.

** *Archiv*, XIV. Band, 5. and 6. Heft, S. 62. Italics are ours.

*** *ibid.*, pp. 663-64.

II

Our critic has "taken" two phenomena, *A* and *B*, which are mutually antagonistic, and argues as follows:

If a growth of contradictions actually takes place here, then the development of the two mutually contradictory elements will be expressed in the following formula:

Formula I, which Mr. P. Struve calls a formula of contradiction:

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
2 <i>A</i>	2 <i>B</i>
3 <i>A</i>	3 <i>B</i>
4 <i>A</i>	4 <i>B</i>
5 <i>A</i>	5 <i>B</i>
6 <i>A</i>	6 <i>B</i>
...	...
<i>nA</i>	<i>nB</i>

Each of these two phenomena, *A* and *B*, grows through the accumulation of homogeneous elements (*Häufung des Gleichartigen*); simultaneously with and thanks to that, the contradiction existing between them also grows, which is ultimately eliminated by the victory of the stronger phenomenon over the weaker: *nA* destroys *nB*.

But, Mr. P. Struve observes, we can imagine that, in social reality, there exist contradictions of quite another kind expressed by a quite different formula:

Formula II, which we propose calling a formula of blunted contradiction:

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
2 <i>A</i>	2 <i>B</i>
3 <i>A</i>	3 <i>B</i>
4 <i>A</i>	2 <i>B</i>
5 <i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
6 <i>A</i>	0 <i>B</i> *

In each of these instances as expressed by the two formulas, there is a certain *interaction* between *A* and *B*. But whilst, in the first instance, the growth of *A* invariably leads to the growth of *B* as well, i.e., to the *sharpening of the contradiction* between these two phenomena, in the second instance, the operation of the constantly growing *A* brings about an increase in the coefficient of *B* only at the outset, and then, *exceeding a definite limit*, it leads to its decrease, and consequently also to a *slackening* of that

* Mr. P. Struve's original reads, not "0*B*" but "kein *B*". As the reader will understand, that is one and the same thing.

contradiction. Thus, the contradiction is resolved here through a "*blunting*" (durch "*Abstumpfung*").*

Mr. P. Struve considers "fabulous" the idea that "at its decisive turns, social development takes place exclusively according to the first formula". But who expressed that "dogma", and when? With Mr. P. Struve, it follows that it is held by all "orthodox" Marxists. That is quite wrong. We think that hardly any of Marx's serious followers will agree to recognise Mr. P. Struve's "first formula" as correct. Without recognition of the correctness of either formula, it cannot, of course, be asserted that it is ("exclusively") after that formula that the historical advance takes place. Mr. P. Struve has awarded this "fabulous dogma" to his "orthodox opponents" with excessive haste.

Later, in the last chapter but one of this article, we shall give a detailed analysis of Mr. P. Struve's first formula, and show its erroneousousness. And now we shall invite the reader to turn his attention to his second formula.

It is designed to express the interaction between *A* and *B*. However, that interaction presupposes both the action of *A* on *B* and, conversely, the action of *B* on *A*. Mr. P. Struve does not say what the latter consists in; he limits himself to determining the action of *A* on *B*. From the formula itself and the accompanying explanations, we have learned that, up to a certain limit, the growth of *A* also conditions the *growth* of *B*, and then, *beyond that limit*, it leads, on the contrary, to a *decrease* in *B*. But what does that mean? It means that the limit indicated is a point beyond which *A's impact on B turns into its direct opposite*. Mr. P. Struve's second formula can therefore serve as quite a good, so to say, algebraical example of that *transition of quantitative changes into qualitative* which is met at every step both in Nature and in social life but is nevertheless numbered by our "critics" (from the camp of the "theorists of cognition") among the "fabulous dogmas" invented by Hegel and accepted on trust by Marx and his "orthodox" followers.

After inviting the reader to remember this example, which will prove very useful to us later, we shall proceed.

Our critic remarks that consideration of the "formula of contradiction" acquires particular interest when it is compared with the fundamental idea of the materialist explanation of history. That is true for many reasons and, incidentally, because, coming from Mr. P. Struve, that comparison shows us whether he has correctly understood the writer he is criticising.

Mr. P. Struve begins that comparison with an excerpt from the frequently quoted and probably universally known

* The inverted commas belong to Mr. P. Struve himself.

Preface to Marx's *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*. "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.... At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure....* No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society."²⁴⁶

After citing this excerpt, Mr. P. Struve sets about commenting it. "What is clearly expressed here," he says, "is the idea of the constant *adaptability*" (*Angepasstsein*) "of legal and political institutions to the economy, as a *normal form of their coexistence*."^{**} The non-correspondence of legal relations and economic relations is a contradiction which leads to law being adapted to the economy. Marx has presented as fundamental the contradiction between the productive forces and production relations (property relations). The adaptation of production relations to the productive forces forms the content of the social revolution. In all of this exposition by Marx, there is the in clarity that, on the one hand, the material productive forces and, on the other, relations of production, which are nothing but an abstract sum of concrete economic, or, in juridical terms, legal relations, are *sui generis* independent essences or 'things'. It is only due to that in clarity that one can speak of the contradiction, or the adaptation, of the productive forces, taken as a whole" (*en bloc*) "to all legal relations taken as a whole too, and see the social revolution as a clash (immaterial whether lasting a single moment or a more or less lengthy period of time) between these two essences. It is clear that social development can be regarded as a lengthy process of various clashes and adaptations. Marx seems to have considered both modes of understanding social revolution correct, and to have failed to notice their incompatibility. As for the socialist revolution in particular, Marx saw it as a mighty clash between the economy and law, inevitably crowned by some decisive event or

* Here Mr. P. Struve explains parenthetically that the superstructure is made up of legal and political institutions, to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond.

** Mr. P. Struve's italics.

social upheaval, in the proper sense of the expression. Thus, in Marx's theory of social development, everything revolves about the relations, or if you please the contradiction between the economy and law. Marx regarded the economy as cause, and law as effect."*

As we shall see, this comment is marked by an extraordinary wealth of theoretical content.** To begin with, we shall take note of the following two points. In Mr. P. Struve's opinion Marx:

1) considered *fundamental* the contradiction that inevitably arises in a progressing society between the productive forces on the one hand, and property relations on the other;

2) saw the social revolution as a violent clash between the economy and law, in consequence of which everything revolves, in his theory, about the relations between law and the economy.

Is this opinion of Mr. P. Struve's correct? In other words, has he properly understood and correctly set forth Marx's theory?

As for the first point, he is indubitably right: the contradiction between society's productive forces and its property relations has always been focal in Marx's theory of social development. To bear that out or rather, for the reader to get a better understanding of Marx's idea, we shall quote, in addition to the passage Mr. P. Struve has cited, from the Preface to *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, the following excerpt from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

"We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

"Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economic and political sway of the bourgeois class."²⁴⁷

As you will see, the matter is perfectly clear: social revolution, meaning the collapse of the *feudal* economic system and the triumph of the *bourgeois* system, was seen and described by Marx as a *clash* (or contradiction) *between the productive forces which had grown in the womb of feudal society, and the property*

* *ibid.*, S. 666-67.

** Of course, there are different kinds of wealth. Mr. P. Struve's wealth consists in his errors; one should not envy that kind of wealth. [Note to second edition.]

relations inherent in that society, or, which is the same, the feudal organisation of agriculture and industry. And if you wish to get a clearer idea of how Marx understood and described the social revolution, which he served with such utter dedication and which will lead to the replacement of the *bourgeois* economic system by the *socialist*, you might well read the following page:

"Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule....

"The productive forces at the disposal of society" (bourgeois—G. P.) "no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered.... The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them" (same place, pp. 8-9).²⁴⁸

It is the elimination of bourgeois property relations that comprises the proletariat's historic revolutionary mission.

The proletariat wages against the bourgeoisie an unending civil war which is more and more expanding in volume and content, ultimately turning into "open revolution, and ... the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat".²⁴⁹

We would refer anyone who wishes to follow up this fundamental idea in Marx's theory of social development in his other writings to the *Poverty of Philosophy* and to pp. 420-21 in Part 2 of Volume III of *Capital*.*

Thus, no doubt is possible: in Marx's theory of social development, everything revolves about the *contradiction between society's productive forces and its property relations*. But if this is quite true and beyond doubt, then it may be asked on what grounds Mr. P. Struve asserts (see point two above) that Marx saw the social revolution as a violent *clash between the economy and law*. Is this second clash identical in significance with the first? Has the contradiction between society's *productive forces* and its *property relations* absolutely the same significance as the contradiction between *the economy and law*?

* We are referring to the German original because the Russian translation is so unsatisfactory. The passage we are referring to is on page 733 of the Russian edition of Volume III.²⁵⁰

To reply to this question, which is of "*fundamental*" importance to us, it should in the first place be established what kind of *concept* our critic associates with the words "*the economy*"; that, of course, cannot be done otherwise than on the basis of his "critical essay", which we are analysing here.

In his analysis of Stammler's²⁵¹ view in respect of the relation of law to the economy, Mr. P. Struve says, among other things, the following: "Unfortunately, the concept of the economy (the economic order, relations of production) is not fully defined by what we consider the 'economic' element in individual social phenomena. *The economy is, for instance, a capitalist economic order....*"*

Several lines below, we come up against an aphorism that says that "*law is already contained in the economy, and vice versa*" (in der Wirthschaft ist das Recht und vice versa enthalten).** Finally, we come across the following argument several lines later: "The circumstance that I have no bread ... constitutes no legal relation between myself and my fellow-citizens ... and let it not be objected to me that, under some other social system, some reasonable legal regulation would do away with the phenomenon of unemployment. That only shows that this economic phenomenon depends on the given *economic, or, in other words, legal system* taken in its totality", etc.***

These explanations show that, with our critic, the words "*the economy*" have the same meaning as the term *the economic* (e.g., the capitalist) *order* or the term *production relations*. But we already know that production relations—or the economic order or structure—are called *property relations* in legal parlance. This was also pointed out both by Marx himself, whose theory is being discussed here, and by Mr. P. Struve, who is analysing that theory.**** Very good. Let us take note of that, and ask ourselves: what does Marx's theory of social development look like in the way his critic presents it? To that question only one answer is possible: *in the way Mr. Struve puts it, it follows that everything revolves around the contradiction between a particular society's property relations, and its law*. Expressed in other words, this means that, according to Marx, the gist of the contemporary so-called social question lies in the contradiction between property relations, say, in the bourgeois France of today, and her Civil Code.²⁵² Or, if you

* *ibid.*, S. 668. Italics are ours.

** *ibid.*, S. 669. Italics are ours.

*** *ibid.*, S. 669-70. Italics are ours.

**** For greater precision, let us put it this way: according to Marx, *a certain part of the production relations* forms what the jurist would call *property relations*. Below we shall see why this term cannot be applied to the sum of the production relations.

would put it otherwise, you might say the following: the contradiction between property relations in present-day bourgeois France, and her Civil Code comprises "das Fortleitende", i.e., that contradiction, which leads that country forward and brings it closer to the socialist revolution. This is perfectly logical and follows inescapably from Mr. P. Struve's words; at the same time, it constitutes such an amazing, such an unintelligible, or, more briefly, such a "*fabulous*" dogma that had Mr. P. Struve made his "critical essay" in Marx's lifetime, and had the author of *Capital* gone to the trouble of acquainting himself with the contents of this unbelievable essay, it would have remained for him only to spread his hands in perplexity, and explain, somewhat changing the words spoken by the main character in Nekrasov's poem *Judgement*.

*The judge, of course, I cannot be
Of my own case; but you'll agree
It's vexing when my critics quote
Against me things I never wrote.
A ploughman would be as surprised*

*If he had sown a field to rye
And not a single stalk came up
Of rye, of wheat or buckwheat, but
Gross barleycorn grew from the seeds,
All intermixed with noxious weeds.*

III

Let the gentle reader not think that we are out to trip the critic over some chance slips. Not at all! The monstrous blunder we have noted is repeated on almost every page of the "essay" and forms the logical hub about which *almost all the content* "revolves" in the "criticism" of revolutionary Marxism* that Mr. P. Struve has clutched out of thin air. Thus, several pages after the commentary we have quoted from, Mr. P. Struve categorically states the following: "A revolution that removes contradiction is in any case logically necessary for the Marxist theory of the constantly mounting contradiction between the economy and law."** These words show that Mr. P. Struve is not only "stubborn" in his incomprehensible error, but besides makes it underlie all his "criticism": he is out to question the necessity of revolution as removing the contradiction, by pointing out that there can be no essential contradiction between law and the

* We shall explain later in what sense we use the epithet *revolutionary* here.

** *ibid.*, S. 673.

economy (i.e., property relations, the economic structure). No less "stubbornness" in error is revealed in the following argument which our "critic" considers irresistible and triumphant:

"What, after Marx, is called relations of production is logically and historically already included in the legal regulation of property relations. For that reason alone, it is logically impossible, while remaining on the Marxist standpoint, to speak of the contradictory development of production relations and the legal system" (but who speaks of that except you, O severe critic! Marx is referring to the contradiction between the *productive forces* and property relations. You yourself "*noted*" this really noteworthy "*circumstance*", in the beginning of your comment—true, without "*special force*". How could you have so suddenly forgotten it when you came to stand in need of "criticising" Marx's theory?—G.P.). "But what is far more important is that recognition of such development actually and absolutely precludes any realistically understood impact of economic phenomena on the legal system" (whence have you taken economic phenomena, Mr. P. Struve? You are dealing with *production* relations, or, in other words, with the *economy*, and you very correctly say that the concept of the *economy* is not at all fully defined by what we call the *economic* element in *social phenomena*—G.P.). "Just think: production relations" (the "critic" again, sans crier gare, returns to production relations, the idea of which, as he himself has remarked, is not at all defined by the concept of economic phenomena.—G.P.), "which are becoming more and more socialist, engender the class struggle; the class struggle gives rise to social reforms, which, it is alleged, enhance the capitalist nature of society. Thus, production relations, which are becoming more and more socialist, engender a legal system which is becoming more and more capitalist. Far from engendering any mutual adaptation between them, the economy's impact on law ever more increases the contradiction existing between them."*

The part of this tirade that follows the words: "*Just think*" seems to have been written for the purpose of "noting with special force" the illogicality of Marx's "orthodox" followers, who recognise the dialectical law of development. But here again, our critic imposes an "absolutely fabulous dogma" on the "orthodox" Marxists, and again his exposition converts into "barley intermixed with noxious weeds" the highly valuable grain of Marx's theory of social development. "*Just think!*" When Marx and his "orthodox" followers speak of the constantly growing contradiction between the *productive forces* in capitalist society and its *production relations*, they understand by the latter bourgeois *property rela-*

* *ibid.*, S. 676-77.

tions, as is most clearly shown by the excerpts given above from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and as Mr. P. Struve himself admits. That is why it could never have occurred either to Marx or to his "orthodox" followers to arrive at the idea—as Mr. P. Struve imputes to them—that bourgeois society's production relations are becoming ever more socialist. Anyone who said that would thereby be expressing the thought—worthy of some newest Bastiat alone—that the *property relations* inherent in capitalist society and so ardently defended by the bourgeoisie are approaching ever closer to the socialist ideal.*

Mr. P. Struve has called the book *The Development of the Monist View of History* the finest exposition of the historico-philosophical foundations of orthodox Marxism. He considers our *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus* fully in the spirit of that book. I would ask the reader to go to the trouble of going through these two books and deciding for himself whether they contain anything resembling what our strange "critic" has ascribed to Marx's "orthodox" followers!

From all this follows the inevitable conclusion that a colossal and truly unbelievable *failure to understand Marx* has served Mr. P. Struve as a base of operations in his "critical" campaign. How glorious a campaign! What profound "criticism"! How interesting a "critic"!

Mr. P. Struve's literary career began in the autumn of 1894 with the appearance of his book *Critical Remarks on the Question of Russia's Economic Development*, which produced quite a commotion. In this book, ponderously written and naive in parts but yet useful on the whole, there simultaneously appeared,

*Embracing like two sisters,*²⁵⁴

and curiously intertwined, two theories: in the first place, the theory of Marx and the "orthodox" Marxists, and, in the second place, the theory of Brentano and his school. The eclectic mishmash in the book's contents justified to a considerable extent both the reproaches that descended on the author from certain "orthodox" Marxists, and the hopes placed on it by other no less "orthodox" followers of Marx: the reproachers were irritated by the *Brentanoism*, while those who placed hopes on Mr. P. Struve expected that this bourgeois theory in his views would be gradual-

* It would be useful to contrapose to this indigestible mishmash Marx's own words: "No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society"²⁵³ (*Zur Kritik*, etc., Vorwort). (Italics are ours.)

ly overcome by the element of *Marxism* present in them. The author of these lines belonged to the number of the hopeful. True, his expectations were not very great: he never considered Mr. P. Struve a man capable of enriching Marx's theory with any substantial theoretical contribution, but he hoped that, in the first place, Mr. P. Struve's Brentanoism would soon be overcome by his Marxism, and, secondly, that the author of *Critical Remarks* was capable of a correct understanding of the author of *Capital*. It now appears that we were mistaken on both scores: Marxism has already yielded place, in Mr. P. Struve's views, to its old neighbour—Brentanoism; besides, our "critic" has revealed a total lack of understanding of the most fundamental and the most important propositions of historical materialism. In this latter respect he has gone very far back indeed, which, of course, is to be accounted for by the influence of that self-same Brentanoism. In view of all this, it remains for us only to openly confess to our error and to say in justification what Euripides used to say: "The Gods do much contrary to expectation; they do not do what we have expected, but, on the other hand, they find ways of doing the unexpected."

IV

As we have seen, it is impossible for us to be mistaken as to the meaning in which Mr. P. Struve uses the words *the economy*, as he himself has tried to give a rigorous definition of that meaning. Nevertheless, let us imagine that we have failed to understand him correctly and that our critic uses the word, not to indicate some economic order or other ("for example, *the capitalist*"), and not the production (property) relations peculiar to a given society, but that *economic element in social phenomena* the notion of which, as he himself has very correctly noted, is not completely defined by the concept of *the economy*. But where will that supposition lead us to?*

Once we accept that, we must naturally also accept another interpretation of Mr. P. Struve's words, to the effect that everything in the Marxist theory revolves about the contradiction

* We have made that supposition on the basis of the following words of Mr. P. Struve: "Jedenfalls aber ist für die Marxsche Theorie die Annahme einer Steigerung der Widersprüche zwischen den ökonomischen Phänomenen und Rechtsnormen charakteristisch!" (ibid., S. 671, III.) [In any case, Marxist theory is marked by the assumption of the mounting contradiction between economic phenomena and legal works.] Consequently, the focus of the Marxist theory here is the contradiction between "legal norms", and "economic phenomena", the notion of which is not fully defined by the notion of *the economy*.

between the economy and law. We are now obliged to assume that he regards as underlying that theory the doctrine of the contradiction (relation) between the *economic phenomena* that take place in a given society, and the *laws* inherent in that society. It is that contradiction that must now be recognised as the hub about which "*everything revolves*" in Marxist theory.

Let us consider *capitalist society* and see in what degree and in which conditions the contradiction between the economic phenomena proceeding in it and its legal system can be a cause impelling its development forward.

Let us suppose that what is known as the *permits* system for the establishment of joint stock companies²⁵⁶ exists in our capitalist society. It is common knowledge that such a system is marked by many disadvantages hampering the development of joint-stock companies and therefore of large-scale production, which now stands in such need of the association of capital belonging to individuals. That is why a *contradiction* will sooner or later arise in our society between an *economic phenomenon*—the growth of large-scale production that stands in need of the development of joint-stock companies—and *law*—inexpedient legislation, which regulates the establishment of such companies. That contradiction can be eliminated only in one way; the destruction of the permits system and its replacement by the so-called *fait accompli* system, which is far more convenient. Of course, the latter system, as one that is incomparably more expedient, will sooner or later become enacted. In that case, the accommodation of a legal norm to an economic phenomenon will, it may be said, take place of itself and, as the French have it, one has to be fou à lier to start speaking of *social revolution* in circumstances in which the development of social life has brought forward *only* contradictions of this kind.

But what are contradictions of this kind marked by? They are marked by the fact of the economic phenomena that contradict *bourgeois law* in no way contradicting *the economic foundation of that law*, i.e., *the property relations of capitalist society*.

The question that now arises is: did Marx himself or any of his "orthodox" followers ever say that the social revolution is caused by contradictions of that kind? No, neither Marx nor his pupils ever said that. According to Marx (we have pointed that out many times, and are now obliged to repeat it), social revolutions are prepared and become inevitable as a result of the contradiction between *society's productive forces* and those of its *property relations* on which the laws peculiar to that society are based. That contradiction is of a quite different (and infinitely more dangerous) kind; with the appearance of *that* contradiction, a revolutionary epoch sets in. To swaddle it in vague and there-

fore empty verbiage on the contradiction between economic phenomena and legal institutions, and on the adaptation of law to the economy means, not throwing light on the question but muddling and obscuring it to the uttermost degree. In truth, what is needed here is Mr. P. Struve's "kritischer Geist", "taken in its entirety", to create even a momentary impression that such muddling and obscuring of the question is equivalent to a further advance of the "realistic" thinking that underlies Marxism as an historical theory. Far from being any *forward movement*, this is not even any *movement of thought* (as the late A. S. Khomyakov used to say); it is simply some untidy and empty—and therefore quite useless and barren—theoretical fussing over nothingness. That kind of fuss can give the greatest pleasure to those of whom Cuno Fischer has spoken in the words we have used in the epigraph, but *to science* such fuss is worse than nothing, for it marks a *vast backward step, a negative phenomenon*.

Marx himself has emphatically said that law, as inherent in a given society, develops on the basis of the latter's economic structure (its property relations).^{*} This can be borne out by a number of most *indisputable examples*. Who does not know today that the property relations of savage tribes of hunters are imbued with communism, and that *an appropriate common law arises on the foundation of those communist relations*? Who is unaware that, on the foundation of feudal property relations (the foundation of the "feudal organisation of agriculture and industry"), *there arose an entire system of legal institutions which were nurtured by that system and disappeared together with it*? Who has not heard that present-day *bourgeois law*—for example, the Civil Code we have mentioned above—evolved on the basis of *bourgeois property relations*? Mr. P. Struve himself, in his comment on Marx (see above; the footnote on page 488) designates as a *superstructure* the legal and political relations that have arisen on the basis of a given economic structure or particular property relations. Besides, Mr. P. Struve has himself admitted that the *fundamental contradiction* pointed out by the Marxist theory of social development is one between society's productive forces and its property relations. Why then does he immediately lose sight of this *fundamental contradiction*, for which he substitutes a secondary contradiction between the economic phenomena within a given economic structure, and the laws for which that structure, as Marx has put it, serves as a real foundation? How can he justify that kind of substitution?

* "The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure...." (Zur Kritik, etc., Vorwort.²⁸⁶); (italics are ours.)

Take *crises*, which the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* points to as a phenomenon that most vividly confirms the idea that bourgeois society's productive forces have outgrown the *property relations*, or the *economic structure*, peculiar to it, and tell us, dear reader, whether that economic phenomenon contradicts *law* which has developed on the basis of bourgeois property relations, for instance the *French legal code of 1804*? What a naive and ridiculous question! *Crises* contradict bourgeois society's *civil law* just as little as the *rates of bills of exchange* contradict its *criminal law*. It is not crises that contradict the Civil Code, but the productive forces that contradict the economic structure ("property relations") that *underlie that code*. What is meant by the words: bourgeois society's productive forces contradict its economic structure, its property relations? They mean that such relations hamper the use of those forces in their full volume and that, when those forces are given extensive play, they impair the proper course of the economy. It consequently follows that the more society's productive forces are developed, the more dangerous their full play becomes to it. This is a contradiction that cannot be removed while bourgeois property relations continue to exist.* What is necessary for its elimination is a *social*

* A reservation is in place here! Of late, many "critics" (including Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky) have pointed out that crises have shed the acute form they formerly had, and that consequently they no longer play that part in the development of social life which Marx with good reason ascribed to them. To that we shall reply as follows: whatever the current *form* of the phenomenon indicated by Marx, its *essence* has remained unchanged. The phenomenon is caused by the contradiction between society's productive forces and its property relations. What the British call "trade depressions" [these two words are in English in the original] bear very little resemblance *in form* to *crises* in the proper sense of the word, but they have quite the same significance *in essence*. To realise that, one has only to read, for instance, the conclusions arrived at by the British Royal Commission set up to study the causes of the depression in trade and industry. "During the past forty years," we read in a note drawn up by several dissenting members of the Commission, "a great change has been wrought in the circumstances of all civilised communities by the application of mechanical and scientific aids to the production and transport of commodities, the world over.... The great difficulty consists no longer, as of old, in the scarcity and dearth of the necessities and conveniences of life, but in the struggle for an adequate share of that employment which affords to the great bulk of the population their only means of obtaining a title to a sufficiency of those necessities and conveniences, however plentiful and cheap they may be.... The growing difficulty (the struggle for an adequate share of employment in presence of the abundance and cheapness of commodities) finds its expression in the system of tariffs, export bounties and other commercial restrictions, adopted and maintained by all civilised nations except our own" (*Final Report of the Royal Commission* etc., p. LV; cf. also p. LXIV). [This passage is cited by Plekhanov in English.] The productive forces of civilised societies have reached such a degree of development that those who have no other commodity

revolution that will destroy *bourgeois* property relations and replace them with *socialist* property relations, which are of a totally different nature. Such is the meaning of Marx and Engels's remark. The economic phenomenon they have cited as an example is indicative of narrow confines (the property relations) limiting bourgeois society's economic life and underlying bourgeois law. Their "critic" passes over in silence (or, more precisely, has completely forgotten, after a single mention) that very contradiction which they have considered the fundamental cause of social revolutions, and then naively remarks that Marx's own theory, if correctly understood, leaves no room for the social revolution, but presupposes the "constant adaptability of law to the economy as a normal form of their coexistence". This kind of criticism involuntarily leads one to recall the words of the Russian fabulist Krylov: *you have failed to notice the elephant*.²⁶⁷

V

It follows that, in whichever of the two possible meanings we understand Mr. P. Struve's words on the contradiction between *law* and *the economy*, which, he asserts, is the theoretical hub of the Marxist theory of social development, we shall have to recognise that he has *understood* that theory quite erroneously, or else has *set it forth* quite wrongly. His error is so egregious, however, and so unexpected that we must again ask ourselves whether all this is the result of some misunderstanding. Or perhaps Mr. P. Struve has been misled by some expression used by Marx and Engels, which he has *misunderstood* or else has been incorrectly used by the founders of scientific socialism themselves.

to sell except their labour power are finding it very hard to find themselves *occupations*, i.e., to sell that labour power and thereby acquire the wherewithal to buy the cheap products now prepared in abundance. *Hardship* is born of *plenty*; *poverty*, of *wealth*. This is the very same contradiction pointed out by Marx and Engels with reference to crises. The only difference is that, in the opinion of the authors of the Report we have quoted from above, this contradiction has arisen during the past forty years, while the authors of the *Manifesto* think that it appeared earlier. Do not think that the majority of the Royal Commission deny the existence of that contradiction. No, the majority have expressed the same view as the minority, only their wording is different: "The world's capacity of production," they say, "will naturally be in excess of its ordinary requirements" (i.e., p. XVII). [This sentence is in English in the original.] This is quite equivalent to the idea that trade depressions [these two words are in English in the original] are caused, like crises, by the absence of correspondence between the market's consuming capacity and the present-day productive forces. But that market capacity is restricted by present-day society's property relations. Thus we again come up against the fundamental contradiction in that society—the contradiction between its property relations, on the one hand, and its productive forces, on the other.

Let us search for the answer together, dear reader. You will probably recall the passage in Engels's celebrated pamphlet *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, which speaks of the fundamental contradiction in the present-day mode of production. Formerly, in the Middle Ages, the *producer* was at the same time the *proprietor* of the tools he used and, with rare exceptions, he *appropriated* for himself *only the product of his own labour*; at present, the *capitalist*, the proprietor of the implements of labour, continues to appropriate as his *private property* the products turned out at the factory by the joint *social labour* of his workers. "The means of production, and production itself, had become in essence socialised. But they were subjected to a form of appropriation which presupposes the private production of individuals, under which, therefore, everyone owns his own product and brings it to market." Hence the contradiction between the mode of production and the form of appropriation. "The new mode of production is subjected to this form of appropriation, although it abolishes the conditions upon which the latter rests."²⁵⁸ This fundamental contradiction contains the germ of all the contradictions in present-day society.

At first glance, it may seem to a "critical" mind which clutches at words without penetrating into the gist of the content they designate that the contradiction indicated here by Engels is between the economy and law, which Mr. P. Struve is dealing with. However, a minimum of effort is required to realise how erroneous such a view is.

In speaking of social production as being contradictory to individual appropriation, Engels is referring to the machine shop of today, in which the workers' labour is united in a single whole, with the output therefore being the product of *social labour*. However, the organisation of labour in such a shop is determined by the present state of *technology*; it characterises the state of the *productive forces*, *not the economic structure of present-day* (capitalist) *society*, which is marked mainly and primarily by its inherent *property relations*, i.e., by the machine shop in question belonging not to the workers united in it but to the capitalist, who exploits those workers. Thus, the contradiction between the *social labour* at the factory and the *individual* appropriation of that labour is the selfsame contradiction we already know between capitalist society's productive forces and its property relations. This has been very well explained by Engels himself: "But just as the older manufacture, in its time, and handicraft, becoming more developed under its influence, had come into collision with the feudal trammels of the guilds, so now modern industry, in its more complete development, comes into collision with the bounds within which the capitalistic mode of production holds it con-

fined. The new productive forces have already outgrown the capitalistic mode of using them."*

It is clear that Engels is in no wise referring to the contradiction between "law" and "the economy". Beside the pamphlet *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* we have quoted from, we do not know a single piece of writing by Marx and Engels that provides even a purely external and at least some verbal pretext for the Marxist theory of social development to be interpreted in the way Mr. P. Struve has done.

We say this with reference to "the contradiction between law and the economy" ("for example, the capitalist economic structure") our "critic" has thrust on Marx. And how will it be, we shall ask, if the "contradiction" imposed on Marx should be understood in another sense, i.e., in the meaning of the contradiction between the economic phenomena (the notion of which is not completely defined by the "economy") and that society's legal institutions? Will it not emerge, in that case, that Mr. P. Struve is saying the same thing as Frederick Engels?

Here, too, it may seem so at first glance, but this time again the matter looks different on closer examination.

The organisation of labour in the workshop is undoubtedly an economic phenomenon. However, this *economic phenomenon* is contradictory, not to law, but to other *economic phenomena*, namely, those property relations in bourgeois society which comprise the "real foundation" of bourgeois law. Identifying that real foundation with the "legal superstructure" that rises above it means setting forth somebody else's theory, not that of Karl Marx, who himself established the distinction between the superstructure f(law) and the foundation (production relations). We are well aware that it would be far easier to "criticise" Marx had he not established that distinction.** But what is to be done about that? After

* «Развитие научного социализма», Женева, 1892, стр. 26 [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation of Engels's book].²⁵⁹

* With Mr. P. Struve, the realisation of that convenience is naively expressed in the following words: "Die von mir vorgetragene Ansicht schliesst sowohl den Marx'schen als auch den Stammler'schen Begriff der 'sozialen Revolution' aus. Die Anpassung des Rechtes an die Sozialwirtschaft hört keinen Augenblick auf und die Entwicklung der jeweiligen Gesellschaftsordnung ist es eben, welche diesen Rahmen umformt und ausweitet" (ibid., S. 672). [The view I have set forth precludes both Marx's and Stammler's notions of the 'social revolution'. The adaptation of law to the social economy does not cease for an instant and it is the development of a given social structure that transforms and extends that framework (ibid., p. 672)]. How right you are, O "critic"! It would have been far better if your "Ansicht" coincided with Marx's; it would have been better still and smoother if your Ansicht, which does not coincide with Marx's, were in keeping with historical reality. Alas, far from being in keeping with it, it "contradicts" it.

all, Marx was not in duty bound to twist the truth to suit the "critics"!

Whatever turn is given to the question, it has to be admitted that Mr. P. Struve has *muddled up things frightfully*, and that it is extremely difficult, or rather *quite impossible*, to find any verisimilar circumstances to extenuate in some measure the fault for that muddling, which falls squarely on him, and most probably on Stammler as well.

As is his wont, Mr. P. Struve "criticises" that writer (he cannot get along without "criticism"); however, he is quite incapable of casting off his influence.

This is not the place to expatiate on Stammler himself, but it should be mentioned, in passing, that he has led into temptation quite a number of "Marxists" in our country, who were first perverted and "blunted" by the so-called critical philosophy now so dear to the hearts of all those who are trying to "*blunt*" our social contradictions.

VI

We have already noted that if the essence of the so-called social question consisted in the non-correspondence of bourgeois law to bourgeois economy the historical necessity of the social revolution could then be spoken of only by raving lunatics. Given that gratifying state of affairs, the theorists of law and intelligent people of practice from the world of the business bourgeoisie would have no difficulty in finding where, as the Germans have it, the shoe pinches, and the worthy bourgeois would have to do nothing more than grumble peevishly and frown threateningly for their parliamentary representatives to immediately give the shoe a new shape. But, it may well be asked, would natural development, in that case, follow Mr. P. Struve's second formula, which we have called *a formula of blunted contradiction*?

Above we took, as an example, the legislation on joint-stock companies. We shall now return to that example, for the sake of convenience. Now tell me, dear reader, what kind of relationship will be established between social life, which calls for the multiplication of joint-stock companies, and the permits system, which hampers that multiplication? As we see it, there will be established between them a *contradiction* that will *constantly grow* until the permits system disappears, yielding place to the *fait accompli* system. Is that the case? It undoubtedly is. If that is so, then what we have here too is a phenomenon which bears out the truth of Hegel's aphorism: *a contradiction leads forward*. In its turn, this new inference makes one realise the comic situation of

those "critics" who are given to censuring Hegel and speaking of a "*blunting of contradictions*".

Mr. P. Struve may retort that a *sharper contradiction* between an outmoded legal norm and a new social need is no guarantee that the *struggle* between the defenders and the enemies of the old norm *will grow sharper*. That will be true, and we are *willing* to admit that, in insignificant cases such as the one examined above, the growth of the contradiction mentioned above may, in certain cases, be accompanied even by a *slackening* of the social struggle, i.e., a *blunting* of the contradiction between the warring parties. True, it should also be noted that this is no more than a supposition, which has to be proved and which we are accepting only out of courtesy for Mr. P. Struve. But can that take place where it is a matter, not of petty things such as legislation on joint-stock companies but of major upheavals in the life of society, which affect the very *foundation* of law: the *economic structure*, and *property* relations? To that question unembellished historical reality answers in a categorical *negative*. We do not know very well in what way development took place in China over a very long and still incomplete period of its decline; however, we do know very well that, in progressing societies, the growth of the contradictions between the new social needs and the old social system is usually accompanied by an exacerbation of the struggle between the innovators and the conservatives. It is to such societies (those that are marching "*forward*") that we can apply what has been said *on the struggle for right* by Ihering in his celebrated pamphlet: "Any right in the world is won in struggle; any important legal principle must be torn from those who have opposed it...." "The interests of thousands of people and entire estates gradually merge with the existing law, so that it cannot be abolished without causing considerable detriment to them. To raise the question of the abolition of a given statute or institution means declaring war on all such interests. Therefore, any such attempt naturally gives rise, through the operation of the instinct of self-preservation, to strong opposition from the interests affected, and thereby to a struggle.... That struggle achieves the greatest intensity when interests take the shape of acquired rights.... All the great gains that are to be found in the history of law: the abolition of slavery and the serf-owning system, freedom of landownership and crafts, freedom of conscience and the like—all these have been won through in a fierce struggle often lasting centuries, and the road law has travelled during its development has often been marked by torrents of blood and everywhere strewn with the ruins of smashed legal institutions."*

* *Der Kampf um's Recht*, 13. Auflage, S. 6, 7 und 8.

If this kind of social development is called one achieved through the *blunting of contradictions*, then we are at a loss to say what should be called their *aggravation*.

In explanation and defence of his second formula, Mr. P. Struve cites two examples, both of which, however, possess a property that hardly suits him, namely, that they "contradict" him most emphatically.

Example one: "Let us suppose, that, as a result of the development of industry, there arises a practico-economic" (*praktisch-wirtschaftliche*) "working-class movement. A harsher law is promulgated banning strikes and workers' associations. Repressions mount, and, together with them, the opposition. But in its further development the working-class movement outgrows the repressions, whose weapon becomes blunt, and, in conclusion, the laws directed against the working-class movement are abolished. Here we have an instance of a contradiction that first increases and then weakens, so that one of the parties finally wins."^{*}

When one of the parties "*wins*", the contradiction, far from increasing, is done away with. That is self-evident. The whole question is whether the contradiction *grows weaker* or, on the contrary, *increases* during the period immediately before the victory of one of the conflicting parties. To this question, Mr. P. Struve himself replies in the negative: in his own example, "opposition or resistance" *grows* until the repressions prove powerless, i.e., until the workers win. True, in his example, the abolition of such a law is preceded by a period during which "the weapon of repressions becomes blunt". But the existence of such a period is *mere supposition*. Will Mr. P. Struve say that such a supposition is in full keeping with historical reality? If he says that it is, then we shall reply that the history of laws directed against workers' associations argues *against* his supposition. Indeed, was the repeal of the laws against associations in Britain, that classical country of compromise, preceded by their less severe application? Not at all. The situation was quite different on the eve of their abolition. According to Howell, dissatisfaction with such laws was constantly mounting, leading to new repressive measures, and when legislation directed against associations in the proper sense of the word proved too weak an obstacle to the mounting torrent of the working-class movement, the government tried to *sharpen its weapon* by appealing to other laws, such as the Sedition Acts.²⁶⁰ For their part, the workers grew ever more embittered until their indignation and the attentats²⁶¹ coming

^{*} *Archiv*, XIV. Band, 5. und 6. Heft, S. 675.

from their midst obliged the government to abolish the hated laws.*

We learn exactly the same from the Webbs and from Kulemann, who, incidentally, merely repeats, in this case, what the former have said.**

The second example cited by our "critic" is no more conclusive than the first one is. This example is concerned with the well-known German "*Anti-Socialist Law of 1878*".²⁶⁴ Mr. P. Struve points out that, with the growth of the working-class movement, that law was applied in ever weaker degree, and was finally abolished. "What is that: a growth or rather a weakening of resistance?" our "critic" asks.

To that question we shall reply with another one: what kind of resistance (*Widerstände*) is he referring to? If he has in view the imperial government's resistance to the aspirations of the Social-Democrats, on the one hand, and of the resistance of the Social-Democrats to the strivings of the imperial government, on the other, then the less severe application of the law, followed by its abolition, did not in any way mean any weakening of such "resistance", as has been well realised both by the Social-Democrats and the imperial government. The less severe application of the Anti-Socialist Law meant merely that the government had realised its *purposelessness*, the latter being the result of the socialists having acquired *conspiratorial skill* and learnt to evade the police snares. Having lost its *raison d'être*, the Law, far from weakening worker dissatisfaction, made it *greater*, irritating the worker masses with its unbearable *police badgering*. Seeing that the results were the reverse of what had been expected, the im-

* [Plekhanov is referring to the French translation of George Howell's *Trade Unionism New and Old* | *Le passé et l'avenir des Trade-Unions* par Georges Howell, traduction par Ch. Le Cour Grandmaison, Paris, 1892, p. 40 et 45.

** Beatrice and Sidney Webb: "The common law and ancient statutes were ruthlessly used to supplement in Combination Acts, often by strained constructions. The Scotch judges in particular ... applied the criminal procedure of Scotland to cases of simple combination.... The whole system of repression which had characterised the statesmanship of the Regency²⁶³ culminated at this period in a tyranny not exceeded by any of the monarchs of the 'Holy Alliance'"²⁶³ (History of Trade Unionism, London, 1894, pp. 84-85). Kulemann: "Erschwert wurde die Lage für die Arbeiter noch durch die nach dem Frieden von 1815 in Verbindung mit dem niedrigen Stande der Preise einsetzende ausserordentliche Herabdrückung der Löhne. Es ist deshalb begreiflich, dass sich überall Geheimbunde bildeten und Verschwörungen stattfanden, die mit blutigen Verfolgungen endeten". (*Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, Jena, 1900, B. 3-3.) [The conditions of the worker after the peace of 1815 became even harder in consequence of the unparalleled fall in wages in connection with the overall drop in prices. That makes one understand the causes of universal formation of secret societies and the conspiracies, which evoked harsh repressions. Indeed, what "blunting" of contradictions!

perial government found the further strict application and even the existence of the law awkward and unprofitable, so it was abolished. If we have now called its history to mind, it is to show how *laws that have lost their raison d'être are abolished but not how social contradictions are "blunted"*.

Everything said and done, unembellished history provides poor testimony in favour of Mr. P. Struve's second formula. But if, nevertheless, he does engage in "criticising" those who recognise as correct Hegel's observation regarding contradictions that lead forward, he must have some serious cause for that. What can that cause be?

To this question, he himself replies with a frankness that is most praiseworthy.

"I have already emphasised," he says, "the circumstance that while social development takes place following the formula of the growth of opposites, a 'social upheaval' must of necessity take the form of political revolution. However, that idea, which underlies the celebrated theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, collapses together with the dialectical course of development."*

So that's how it is. We are told that the crux of the matter lies in *political revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat*. We shall place that on record!

An unflagging psychological urge to undermine the theoretical foundation of the celebrated theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and political revolution, as necessary for the social emancipation of that class, has led the critic P. Struve, on the threshold of the twentieth century, to base his objections to "orthodox" Marxism on more than insufficient premises.

Under the influence of this unflagging psychological urge, Mr. P. Struve has ascribed to the Marxist theory of social development a content that is quite unlike what it has in reality; this "basic" error of his has naturally brought in its train a number of others of greater or lesser significance. His incorrect understanding of Marxist theory has found reflection, in the mind of our "critic", in the form of the "*obscurity*" of the theory itself. Thus, he has discerned, as we learn, an inclarity to the effect that, in that theory, society's productive forces and production relations are a kind of essences or "things". Our "critic" thinks that it is only due to such obscurity that one can speak of the contradiction between all productive forces taken together, and all production relations taken together too, and to imagine the social revolution as a clash between those forces and those relations. We have also learnt from Mr. P. Struve that Marx's socio-political

* *ibid.*, S. 674.

world-outlook was marked by another obscurity: on the one hand, he held that view on the development of society through mounting contradictions, which is now defended by his "orthodox" followers; on the other hand, he was inclined to a view on the development of society about which Mr. P. Struve's "social" policy now "revolves", and which is expressed in the formula of a blunted contradiction. At the same time, the author of *Capital* was not cognisant of the incompatibility of such views.

Let us analyse the first "obscurity".

In the present-day machine shop, i.e., at the factory, the labour of the *proletarians* working there assumes the nature of *social labour*, while the factory itself belongs to an *individual* or to *individuals*. The organisation of labour at the factory contradicts the social relations of production, namely, the *property relations* in present-day society. But what is the factory itself? Inasmuch as it is a sum of advanced implements of labour, it is a component of what we call *social productive forces*. Inasmuch as the totality of advanced *implements* of labour calls for a certain *organisation* of that labour, i.e., certain *relations among the producers*, the factory is a *social relation of production*.^{*} If that relation begins to contradict the property relations in capitalist society, if the *factory no longer gets along with capital*, then that means that a *certain part* of the social relations of production no longer corresponds to another part, and that the sentence "society's productive forces contradict its property relations" should be understood in that evolutionary sense which precludes any idea of those forces and those relations as certain independent essences. That is why it becomes impossible, indeed, to speak of a contradiction between the productive forces and *all relations of production "taken together"*. But who else but our "critic" speaks of that? In any case, neither Karl Marx nor Frederick Engels have done that.^{**}

* "Machinery is no more an economic category than the bullock that drags the plough. Machinery is merely a productive force. The modern workshop, which is based on the application of machinery, is a social production relation, an economic category." (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 107.)²⁶⁵

** At this point, however, the reader's attention should be drawn to the following feature of the terminology used by the writers just named. When they are speaking of the main contradiction that impels social development forward, they use the words *relations of production* in the narrower sense of *property relations*. An instance is the excerpt we gave in a previous remark and taken from the Preface to *Zur Kritik*. It states that the new relations of production do not take the place of the old ones before the material conditions for their existence are evolved. By the material conditions for the existence of the new relations of production (property relations) are meant, in this context, also those immediate relations between producers in the process of production (i.e., the organisation of labour at the factory or textile mill) which, in the broader sense, should also be called *relations of production*. It is this circumstance that might very well have misled the superficial "critic".

Note that Mr. P. Struve, who has been speaking all the time of the contradiction between law and the economy, has nevertheless suddenly recollected that, in the Marxist theory, that contradiction is not the main driving force of social development, and has gone on to speak of the contradiction between the productive forces and the social relations of production. Mieux vaut tard que jamais! On the other hand, this return to the genuine theoretical focus of Marx's theory would be really worth while only if Mr. P. Struve went to the trouble of *understanding* Marx's words before setting about "criticising" them. However, *understanding* them is something he has not considered necessary.

Mr. P. Struve has unconsciously gone over from one incorrect understanding of Marx's theory to another just as wrong; moreover, he has failed to notice that these two wrong modes of understanding are "*incompatible*". Yet sometimes stirring in his mind is a vague consciousness that something is somehow out of joint. Then, to soothe his own theoretical conscience and to prevent his readers from raising objections, he lays the blame at another's door and accuses Marx of that very "obscurity" and that very blending of incompatible ideas which are the main feature of his own "criticism". That kind of critical device will not satisfy all readers but it seems to be quite satisfactory to Mr. P. Struve himself. At least, somebody is pleased.

Let us take note of another circumstance.

Mr. P. Struve has just rebuked Marx for all productive forces, *taken together*, entering, in his theory, into contradiction with all social relations of production *taken together* too. But what did we hear from him a few pages back? Here it is: "Just think ... production relations, which are becoming more and more socialist, engender a legal system that is becoming more and more capitalist. Far from engendering any mutual adaptation between them, the economy's impact on law ever more increases the contradiction existing between them." That was how—as Mr. P. Struve himself then put it—the course of social development should present itself to those Marxists who recognise the dialectical law of development. But Marx himself recognised that law. Consequently, he too should have had the same idea of the course of social development. However, *this* idea does not in any way resemble the one we have just considered: *there* (in the idea we have just examined) the productive forces ever more contradict the production relations, which evidently play the part of a *conservative element*; *here* that *conservative element* turns into a *progressive* one: the production relations become ever more *socialist*, and the contradiction exists, not between the backward production relations and the advanced productive forces, but between the advanced production relations and the backward legal system (which ever

more "becomes capitalist"). And all this, it is claimed, is *after Marx*! What is all this ... muddled thinking? Mr. P. Struve harps on one and the same thing: he is not at fault; it all sprang from muddling by Karl Marx, who held two incompatible views! But we can now already understand the meaning of this pretext, for we already know that this muddling comes, not from Marx but from his "critic", and we shall have no difficulty in revealing where and in what the latter has muddled things.

Mr. P. Struve, who has rebuked Marx for his productive forces, taken together, contradicting all the social relations of production, again taken together, has at the same time sensed that his rebuke was not quite well founded, and that, with Marx, the development of the productive forces is also accompanied by *a change in the mutual relation among producers in the process of production*. However, he did not know *which relations of production* undergo change parallel with the development of the productive forces, and which lag behind that development, their backwardness creating the need for a radical social upheaval—the social revolution. In his ignorance, he made use of that selfsame clumsy device which he had ascribed to Marx: he took, "*all together*", all the social relations of production, and declared that Marx and the Marxists thought that such relations were becoming more and more *socialist*, while the legal system was becoming more and more imbued with the spirit of *capitalism*. Of course, Marx and the "orthodox" Marxists never maintained anything of the kind. However, the "fundamental" absurdity ascribed to them, which directly "*contradicts*" another "fundamental" absurdity ascribed to them elsewhere by the same "critic", is highly characteristic of the chaotic ideas reigning in Mr. P. Struve's head regarding Marx's theory of social development!

VII

The extent of that chaos is indeed boundless. We do not feel equal to depicting it in all its glory: that would call for the pen of a Derzhavin, but, to round off our characterisation, we shall make mention of one of the "*obscurities*".

According to Mr. P. Struve, the concept of *the sum of the production relations in a given society* is overlapped, in Marx's theory, by the concept of the totality of the concrete legal relations. For the reader to form his own judgement, we shall give two or three examples.

Example One: the mutual relations among producers in the modern machine shop represent, as we have seen, social relations of production. These mutual relations in the process of production, however, do not comprise any legal relations among them

It is between them and their employer that such relations exist. But that is another story.

Example Two: value, according to Marx, is a social relation of production. The concept of value, however, is not overlapped by the concept of legal relations among people who enter into exchange deals with one another.

Example Three: competition is a production relation inherent in bourgeois society. It gives rise to many legal relations, but its concept is not at all overlapped by that of such legal relations.

Example Four: capital ... but enough! The reader himself can now see that Mr. P. Struve is no end of a muddler. For our part, we shall only add that, in this instance, our "critic" was drawn into his strange error by Stammler, whose influence he could not escape.

Let us now return to the focal point in the stand taken by our "critic"—his arguments on the various formulas of social development.

We said at the outset that no "orthodox" Marxist would agree to acknowledge the correctness of his first formula. Then, in our criticism of Mr. P. Struve, we insisted that social development takes place through an *aggravation* of contradictions, not through their *blunting*. Some readers may have taken this as a recognition of the correctness of that very formula which we declared erroneous. That is why we find it necessary to explain matters, while reminding the reader that Marx himself was not given to "formulas" and, in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, bitingly ridiculed Proudhon for the latter's¹ predilection for them.

The reader will remember the "formula of contradiction" drawn up by Mr. P. Struve.

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
2 <i>A</i>	2 <i>B</i>
3 <i>A</i>	3 <i>B</i>
4 <i>A</i>	4 <i>B</i>
5 <i>A</i>	5 <i>B</i>
6 <i>A</i>	6 <i>B</i>
...	...
<i>nA</i>	<i>nB</i>

Whence has that *A* appeared? Whence *B*? Is *A* a cause of the existence of *B*? Is *B* a cause of the existence of *A*? All this is wrapped in mystery. From Mr. P. Struve we learn only that *interaction* exists between *A* and *B*, but that formula does not even express interaction: it merely points out that *B grows in direct proportion to the growth of A*. Mr. P. Struve has limited himself to this statement in the supposition that a formula that expresses the relation between the growth of *B* and that of *A* depicts with sufficient

completeness the view held by the "orthodox" Marxists regarding the course of social development. "Each of the two phenomena A and B grows through the accumulation of homogeneous elements," he says. "At the same time and as an outcome, the contradiction existing between them also grows, which is ultimately removed by the triumph of the stronger phenomenon: nA destroys nB ."

But if nA destroys nB , that final outcome of the "interaction" between the two phenomena should also have found its expression in Mr. P. Struve's first formula. Yet, it does not express that outcome; its concluding

$$nA \quad nB$$

merely indicates that B grows in direct proportion to the growth of A , but not that the growth of A brings about the destruction of B . Consequently, Mr. P. Struve's formula should first of all be corrected as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} & A & B \\ 2A & & 2B \\ 3A & & 3B \\ \dots & & \dots \\ nA & & nB \\ n \text{ [or rather: } (n + x)] A & oB \end{array}$$

Let us proceed further and see whether this slightly corrected formula is in keeping with the course of social development where the latter takes place through an *aggravation* of contradictions.

As an example, let us consider the social revolution that took place in France at the end of the eighteenth century and is known in history by the name of the Great French Revolution.

This *social revolution* utterly destroyed the "ancien régime" and ushered in the full and immediate supremacy of the bourgeoisie. However, it was prepared by a lengthy process of *social evolution* which lasted for many centuries. The struggle waged by the third estate against the spiritual and temporal aristocracy began as early as the thirteenth century and, in a wide variety of forms, did not flag until 1789.* The bourgeoisie which, in that year, engaged

* "Elle" (la Révolution) "a pris, il est vrai, le monde à l'improviste et cependant elle n'était que le complément du plus long travail, la terminaison soudaine et violente d'une œuvre que avait passé sous les yeux de dix générations d'hommes" (A. de Tocqueville, *l'Ancien régime et la Révolution*, 2^e édition, Paris, 1856, p. 55). [It (the Revolution), it is true, took the world by surprise, though it was only the completion of a very long labour, the sudden and violent termination of a work that had been taking place before the eyes of ten generations.]

historical enemies in decisive battle, had been, as is so well pointed out in the *Communist Manifesto*, created by a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange. Each new step in its *economic* might was accompanied by certain *political* (i.e., *legal*) gains. Anyone who thinks that the feudal regime remained unchanged throughout its existence is greatly in error. The victories scored by the advancing bourgeoisie were constantly modifying the feudal social structure, into which they were constantly bringing various more or less significant *reforms*. It might have been thought that these reforms should have "*blunted*" the contradictions existing within feudal society, and thereby prepared the peaceful, gradual and almost imperceptible triumph of the new order. As is common knowledge, matters developed in another way. The reforms the bourgeoisie were able to achieve, far from "*blunting*" the contradictions between its innovatory aspirations and the old social order, gave a fresh impetus to the growth of its forces, encouraged those aspirations still more and thereby *aggravated* these contradictions even more gradually preparing the social storm with the onset of which it was no longer a matter of *reform* but of *revolution*, not of *changes within the old order* but of its *complete elimination*.* That was why the third estate's hatred for the *ancien régime* was far stronger on the eve of the revolution than ever before.** As Tocqueville pointed out, the preceding demolition of part of the feudal institutions made the remaining part a hundred times more hateful.*** This remark is apt in the measure in which it contains the truth that concessions made *by the old to the new* in no way "*blunt*" the contradiction between *the old* and *the new*. But it is wrong, inasmuch as Tocqueville is out to say that the feudal yoke on the eve of the revolution in France was lighter than ever before. The abolition of *part* of the feudal institutions did not yet mean any *easing* of the feudal yoke: the rapid growth of the new social requirements could—and, as we see did—make the *surviving part* still more injurious to the social advance, and therefore even more oppressive and more hated than

* "D'époque en époque la législation a été amenée ainsi à toucher aux attributs seigneuriaux. Cela s'est vu partout, et partout il a sonné une heure où il ne s'est pas agi d'y porter la réforme uniquement, de les déplacer ou de les restreindre, mais de les faire disparaître sans retour" (Henri Doniol, *La Révolution française et la Féodalité*. Seconde édition, Paris, 1876, p. 6.) [From one epoch to another legislation had come to encroach on the privileges of the nobility. This was to be seen everywhere, and everywhere the hour had struck when it was not solely a matter of reforms, of replacing or restricting them, but of destroying them for all and good.]

** "C'est pourquoi ce siècle avait tant de répulsion vis-à-vis de la féodalité et des droits seigneuriaux." Doniol, l.c., same page. [That is why this century has had such a repulsion against feudalism and seigniorial rights.]

*** l.c., p. 72.

the entire feudal system had previously been.* Besides, even under the old order, there had been different kinds of institutions. Tocqueville himself admits that, with the passage of time, the privileges separating the nobility from the bourgeoisie in France, *far from decreasing, had actually grown greater*.** As he puts it, a man of the middle class had found it easier to become a nobleman in the reign of Louis XIV than under Louis XVI. He goes on to say that, in general, the more the French nobility turned into *a caste*, the more it ceased from being an *aristocracy*.*** All this has been fully borne out by other historians. Thus, Doniol has pointed out that on the eve of the Revolution there was general complaint against the growth of feudal oppression. "Each locality complains of a considerable growth" (of feudal oppression) "and tries to back its complaint with facts."**** Just as categorically, Alfred Rambaud has expressed the thought that the reforms extracted by the bourgeoisie from the aristocracy did not weaken the oppressiveness of the old order. "While the ancien régime tried to amend certain of its shortcomings," this researcher says, "it seemed to have gone to pains to aggravate all its vices. It was a time" (immediately preceding the Revolution) "when the edicts of 1779, 1781 and 1788 excluded all members of the third estate (roturiers) from commissions on the army; when the Royal Court, which did not dare publish an edict on this question, made it a rule of conduct that in future 'all ecclesiastical benefits, from the most modest priory to the richest abbeys, should be appanages of the nobility'; when the parliaments refused to admit into their midst any magistrate who could not prove two generations of gentility, and when the Bordeaux Parliament for two years refused to install Councillor Dupaty as its President. As the higher courts were in the hands of the nobles, the roturiers and the rural communities lost all the cases they had brought against the pretensions of the

* This is all the truer because there was a time when the feudal system did not *hold back* the advance of society, but, on the contrary, *promoted* it. Fustel de Coulanges was right in pointing out, with reference to the feudal castles: "Dix siècles plus tard les hommes n'avaient que haine pour ces fortesseigneuries seigneuriales. Au moment où elles s'élevèrent, ils ne sentirent qu'amour et reconnaissance. Elles n'étaient pas faites contre eux, mais pour eux." (*Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*, tome IV, pp. 682-83). [Ten centuries later the people had nothing but hatred for these feudal fortresses. When they were being built the people felt only love and gratitude towards them: they had been built not against but for them.] The same can be said of the entire organisation of agriculture and industry.

** *ibid.*, pp. 143, 154, 155, 156.

*** *ibid.*, pp. 156 et 157.

**** *La Révolution française et la Féodalité*, p. 44; compare also with page 42: "Que plus est, tout cela est signalé pour avoir pris récemment une intensité nouvelle." [Moreover, all this is significant because it has recently taken on a new intensity.]

seigneurie; this led to a recrudescence of *feudalism* in the countryside. The Royal Government ... favoured any persecution launched by the landowners and the land commissars against the peasants. In certain of their petitions of 1789, the roturiers expressed the wish that the half of the parliaments should be composed of non-nobles; they were to win the guarantees the Huguenots had tried to win during the reign of Henri IV. The all-pervading spirit of reaction made itself universally felt both in the decree of the Paris Parliament, which condemned Boncerf's book on feudal privileges to be burnt (1776), and in the banning of the use of scythes in the harvesting of wheat, as well as in the decree of 1784 which demanded that all scarves made in the French kingdom should be the same in length as in width. Finally, the royal authority itself, which had stripped parliament of any right of control over legislation and finances and forcibly dissolved the Assemblies in 1788, was out to establish what had never before existed in France—a regime of unrestricted arbitrariness. It was becoming more despotic than the government of Louis XIV at a time when it had become evident to all that it was incapable of using its authority for the common weal.”*

As opposed to the French scholars we have just quoted from the Russian savant M. M. Kovalevsky has roundly condemned the use of the term *feudalism* as applied to the socio-economic structure of eighteenth-century France. “Nothing gives a falser idea of the economic and social order in France,” he says, “than calling them feudal. The term is applicable to them just as little, for instance, as to the Russian landed-estate system on the eve of 1861.”**²⁸⁶ But it will suffice to read the chapter (the second in Volume One), from which we have taken the lines quoted here, to see the measure in which French agriculture and the French agricultural class suffered from the *survival* of a system which Mr. Kovalevsky himself calls *feudal*. Besides, Mr. M. Kovalevsky, in full agreement with the French historians we have quoted, has noted that on the eve of the Revolution both the nobility and the royal authorities themselves did everything in their power to maintain the surviving feudal institutions and to fortify their *practical* significance.

* *Histoire de la civilisation française*, 6^e édition, tome second, pp. 599-600. Rambaud is in full agreement with the opinion of Chérest, he has quoted from, who says: “Our political institutions had the strange fortune of not improving after Henri IV; instead of advancing with the passage of time and the progress in ideas and morals, they moved backwards despite the morals, ideas and the times.... The government of the ancien régime had become” (on the eve of 1789) “more imperfect and more hostile to the aspirations of the educated class than it had been in the Middle Ages.”

** «Происхождение современной демократии», т. I, стр. 59. [The Origin of Modern Democracy.]

"The quarter century prior to the Revolution," he writes, "presents to us a number of attempts to restore disused obligations and payments."* Again in full agreement with Tocqueville and Doniol, he says that the French government of the time artificially fostered the caste spirit and caste exclusiveness through its legislation.**

In a word, this book by a Russian researcher, like the writings of his precursors abroad, testifies to the times immediately preceding the French Revolution being marked, *not by a blunting* but, on the contrary, *by a very sharp aggravation of the contradictions* between the old order and the new social needs. But both Mr. M. Kovalevsky and the French historians have shown that *this* aggravation of contradictions was itself the complex outcome of a lengthy historical process during which the old order was ever more crumbling away, its defenders forfeiting one position after another. What follows from this indisputable historical truth is, first, that the victories gained by the innovators over the conservatives and leading to *reforms do not preclude revolution but, on the contrary, bring it closer*, evoking in the conservatives reactionary strivings natural in such cases, and, in the innovators, a thirst for ever new conquests. If we would depict, in a single formula, this historical process, in which *revolution is a moment of evolution* and is prepared *by reforms*,*** we shall need something more complex than the "formula of contradictions" proposed by Mr. P. Struve. We know of no formula that is capable of giving any satisfactory expression to this multilateral process. However, on the basis of everything we have said on the course of the struggle waged by the third estate against the ancien régime, we can speak of the need of essential amendments to Mr. P. Struve's first formula.

If a lengthy historical development of elements in a new society is marked by the victories of the innovators and the defeats of the conservatives, then the formula we have referred to must certainly very definitely indicate this highly important circumstance. Yet, we have not found a hint of that there. On the contrary, it says that the growth of *A* is invariably accompanied by the directly proportional growth of *B*, right up to the moment at which *nA*

* l.c., pp. 124-25.

** *ibid.*, p. 49.

*** Mr. P. Struve says: "Somit blieb es unserer Zeit vorbehalten, hinter den sozialen Reformen Fallstricke des Opportunismus zu wittern" (*ibid.*, S. 679). [Thus it has fallen to our times to suspect social reforms as snares laid by the opportunists.] The reference is to the "orthodox" Marxists. From what we have said in the text, the reader will see that, in respect of us at least, his reproach is wholly groundless, yet he considers us among the most orthodox of the orthodox.

destroys nB . To express the actual course of things, it must be changed, in the first place, as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} A & nB & \\ 2A & (n-1) B & \\ 3A & (n-x) B & \\ \dots & \dots & \\ nA & B & \\ mA & \frac{1}{2}B & \end{array}$$

Here the first row should express the constant development of new social needs, and the second the no less constant modifications in the old order, the concessions exacted from the conservatives by the innovators. But since these concessions do not, as we already know, preclude any *aggravation of the contradictions* between the old and the new, then to the *two rows* we already have there should be added a *third one*, which expresses the *result of the interaction* between constantly growing A and (*in general*, i.e., despite the temporary successes of the reactionaries) the just as constantly decreasing B . By adding this third row we get:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} A & nB & C \\ 2A & (n-1) B & 2C \\ 3A & (n-x) B & 3C \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ nA & B & nC \\ mA & \frac{1}{2}B & mC \end{array}$$

However far this new formula is removed from the *ideal*, i.e., from what should give complete expression to actual development through the aggravation of contradictions, it is, nevertheless, far closer to reality than Mr. P. Struve's first formula. Its advantage lies in *one-sidedness* being alien to it, and that in it, as in real life, reforms do not preclude revolution. On the contrary, it shows that the possibility of revolution, far from being precluded, is created by reforms: what a near-sighted or prejudiced glance may take for a "*blunting*" of contradictions is in actual fact a source of their *aggravation*.

VIII

In our opinion, we repeat, the actual course of the historical development of human societies cannot be expressed with due completeness by any single "formula". It is, however, for that very reason that it may prove very useful to make another attempt to give schematic expression to that course.

We shall ask the reader to take note of the following excerpt, or the length of which we apologise most sincerely in advance:

"It is slowly and only through arduous struggle that the ruling order develops, under which people live and work. After a lengthy struggle, frequent setbacks, erroneous attempts and insistent efforts to move forward, an order is ultimately set up which, on the basis of past experience, meets present needs, and under the protection of which the individual forces will develop with the greatest advantage for the weal of society. But as soon as so favourable a situation is established, there appear new needs, previously unprovided for. There appears a striving to modify the existent and gradually alter it. To outweigh this striving there develops, on the other hand, a one-sided desire to preserve the old order of things in its entirety. The forms established with a view to the public good are obstinately clutched at, towards the end, by private and selfish interests. In the long run, the preservation of the old and unchanged forms is demanded only by false interests that do not understand the significance such forms once possessed. In conclusion, there often remains a single naked form, wholly unviable, next to which the new and fresh life finds expression in completely new forms, until the day comes when the old form is utterly destroyed, even in its external manifestations."*

Here we have before us something that also resembles a formula of social progress, the correctness of which will, we hope, not be denied even by the most indefatigable "critic"; definite *social needs* engender definite *forms of everyday life* that are necessary for society's further advance. However, that advance, which has become possible thanks to the given forms of everyday life, gives rise to *new social needs* that are no longer in keeping with the *old forms* of everyday life created by the *former needs*. Thus, there arises a *contradiction* which grows more and more under the influence of the continuing social advance and ultimately leads to the old forms of everyday life once created by society's burning needs losing all useful content. They are then abolished after a more or less lengthy struggle, and yield place to *new* ones.

This (objective) "formula of progress" expresses, as the reader will see, the mutual relation (the "interaction") between *content* and *form*. The content is the *social needs*, which have to be met; *social institutions* are the form. Content engenders form, thereby ensuring itself further development. The latter, however, renders its form unsatisfactory; a contradiction arises; contradiction leads to struggle, and struggle, to the destruction of the *old* form and its replacement by a *new* one, which, in its turn, ensures the further development of content, that makes the form unsatisfactory, and so on and so forth, until development comes to a standstill. This

* Adolf Held, *Entwicklung der Grossindustrie*. [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation of Held's book, p. 19.]

is that very law of which the late Nikolai Chernyshevsky spoke in the following eloquent words:

"An eternal change of forms; an eternal denial of form as engendered by a certain content or striving; in consequence of the increase of that striving, a higher development of the same content! Whoever has understood this great, eternal and universal law, whoever has learnt to apply it to any phenomenon—O, how calmly will he greet opportunities that others will eschew! Repeating after the poet:

*Ich hab 'mein' Sach auf Nichts gestellt
Und mir gehört die ganze Welt,*²⁶⁷*

he will not regret anything that has outlived its time, and will say: 'Happen what may, our day will come.'"

This great law of the denial of form as engendered by certain content in consequence of the further growth of that content is indeed a universal law, because subordinate to it is the development, not only of social but also of organic life.** It is indeed eternal in the sense that its operation will cease only when all development comes to an end. But this great, universal and eternal law is at the same time that "*formula of contradictions*" which, probably better than all the others, expresses Marx's view of the course of social development.

Here is what we read in Part II of Volume Three of *Capital*:

"To the extent that the labour-process is solely a process between Man and Nature, its simple elements remain common to all social forms of development. But each specific historical form of this process further develops its material foundations and social forms. Whenever a certain stage of maturity has been reached, the specific historical form is discarded and makes way for a higher one. The moment of arrival of such a crisis is disclosed by the depth and

* [I stake on "no" and the world belongs to me.]

** "Denn das ganze Leben ist eine kontinuierliche Kette von Bewegungserscheinungen der organischen Materie, welche immer mit entsprechenden Formveränderungen verknüpft ist." (Häkel, *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen*, XVII. Kapitel. [For all life is an unbroken chain of evolution of organic matter, always linked with corresponding changes of form.] This law manifests itself with amazing clarity and explicitness in the embryology of animals that develop through metamorphosis, for example, certain insects (Diptera, Lepidoptera, etc.). As is common knowledge, metamorphosis can be *incomplete* or *complete*. In the latter case, a larva turns into a pupa, and is then encased in a special husk that protects it from any unfavourable impact from the outer world. When the series of transformations within the pupa's organism ends, the protective husk becomes *superfluous*; it hampers the further vital functions of the organism, *contradicts* them, and therefore bursts open when the contradiction reaches the appropriate degree of intensity. Consequently, what we have here is a revolutionary explosion, a *break in gradualness*. In general, Nature is a great revolutionary, and shows little concern over the "blunting of contradictions".

breadth attained by the contradictions and antagonisms between the distribution relations, and thus the specific historical form of their corresponding production relations, on the one hand, and the productive forces ... on the other hand. A conflict then ensues between the material development of production and its social form."*

Social man's productive impact on Nature, and the growth of the productive forces involved in that impact—such is the *content*; society's economic structure, its property relations provide the *form*, engendered by a given content (the particular degree in the "development of material production") and rejected in consequence of the *further development of that content*. Once it has arisen, the contradiction between form and content is not "blunted" but *increases*, thanks to the continuous growth of the content, which far outstrips the ability of the old form to change in keeping with the new needs. Thus a moment arrives sooner or later when the elimination of the *old form* and its replacement by a *new* one becomes necessary. Such is the meaning of the Marxist theory of social development.

Whoever has realised this perfectly clear and at the same time most profound meaning has also understood the revolutionary significance of *Marxist dialectics* in its application to social questions.

"In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."**

* *Das Kapital*, III. Band, II. Theil, S. 420-21.²⁶⁸

** *Das Kapital*, Vorwort zur zweiten Auflage, S. XIX.²⁶⁹ In view of these explanations by Marx, one must consider strange but at the same time highly characteristic of critics à la P. Struve, the circumstance that these gentlemen have declared Marxist dialectics the weakest link in Marx's theory. "In der Entwicklungslehre welche unstreitig das Charakteristikum und die Glanzleistung des Marxschen Sozialismus bildet," says Mr. Struve, "liegt auch seine verwundbare Stelle, und sie liegt eben in der angeblich unüberwindlichen 'Dialektik'" (ibid., S. 686). [In the theory of development, which is indisputably the most characteristic and brilliant aspect of Marx's socialism, also lies its vulnerable point, and that lies mainly in its allegedly invincible "dialectics"]. The actual reason for this statement is clearly shown by the words immediately following this passage from the selfsame Mr. P. Struve: "Man wird die vielen Wiidersprüche nicht los, wenn man nicht ganz

Adopt the viewpoint of Marx's dialectics, dear reader, and you will see how desperately feeble and how ridiculously clumsy are the efforts of those "critics" who are trying so hard to bring into Marx's coherent theory a certain "blunting" element so dear to their hearts! Then you will not be embarrassed by the numerous and often amazing "*obscurities*" these esteemed gentlemen attempt to introduce into the *interpretation* of Marx's theory. And if you finally lose all patience, and words of irritation burst from your lips, then it will not at all be because the imaginary force of their puerile arguments has irritated you, but because you will find impermissible and scandalous the *claim* some of them make to considering and calling themselves *Marxists*. We fully understand that so ridiculous a claim merits the most severe condemnation, so we shall not at all be surprised if you exclaim in your impatience: "For heavens sake, Messrs. the critics! what kind of Marxists are you?! Marx has sown dragons, while you are only ... you are only ... well, in a word, you are organisms of quite a different calibre!"

In our next article we shall see how unsuccessfully Mr. P. Struve, basing himself on "critical" philosophy, "criticises" Marx's concept of social revolution. In it we shall get acquainted with his argumentation, which is levelled against what Messrs. the critics call *Marx's theory of the impoverishment of the proletariat*, and comes out in defence of *the theory of the blunting of the contradictions existing in capitalist society*, which has long been put forward by the bourgeois apologists.

ARTICLE TWO

Mr. P. Struve is neither the first nor the last forerunner of the theory of the "blunting" of contradictions between the interests of the proletariat and those of the bourgeoisie. This theory had many adherents prior to Mr. Struve, and *there will be* still more *after him*, since it is spreading extremely rapidly in the *educated stratum of the petty bourgeoisie*, i.e., that class whose very position has doomed it to vacillation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It deserves the closest consideration for the very reason that it is spreading so rapidly, trying to pass itself off as the most

entschieden den gedanken der 'sozialen Revolution' als theoretischen Begriff fallen lässt." [These innumerable contradictions can be got rid of only if one entirely rejects 'social revolution' as a theoretical concept.] Goethe's Faust says to Mephistopheles: "Das Pentagramma macht dir Pein!" [The Pentagram is tormenting you!] It can be said of our "critical" mind that what macht Pein to him is the concept of the social revolution (otherwise the "Zusammenbruchstheorie") in connection with the concept of a *political revolution which signifies the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

up-to-date and also "*critical*" socialism, which has come to take the place of the allegedly outmoded socialism of Marx and his "dogmatic" followers. Whoever wants to combat that theory should know both its theoretical genealogy and its present value. For that reason, the reader will feel no surprise if we leave our "*critic*" for a while so as to get a closer knowledge of his precursors and his still extant and more or less distant kinsmen.

I

The price of labour power and surplus value are in inverse ratio to each other. The dearer labour power is sold, the lower the rate of surplus value, and vice versa. The interests of the *seller* of labour power are diametrically opposed to those of its *buyer*. Taken in its essence, this contradiction can be neither removed nor "*blunted*" until the buying and selling of labour ends, i.e., until the capitalist mode of production is eliminated. *However, the terms* under which the buying and selling of labour power are effected can change in one direction or another. If they change to the advantage of the *sellers*, the price of labour power *rises* and the working class receives, in the form of wages, a greater share of the value created by its labour than before. This, in its turn, leads to an *improvement of its social position and a decrease in the distance between the exploited proletariat and the capitalists, who exploit it*. If the terms on which labour power is sold change to the advantage of its *buyers*, then its price *falls*, and the working class gets a *smaller part of the value* created by its labour *than before*. This is inevitably followed by a *deterioration in the proletariat's social position and a greater distance between it and the bourgeoisie*. In the first instance, we seem to have a right to speak of a blunting of the contradiction, if not between the workers and the employers, then at least between the interests of the worker, on the one hand, and the existence of the capitalist system, on the other. In *fact*, this will only *seem* to be a right; we have already seen, in our first article, that the improvement in the French bourgeoisie's social condition, far from blunting the contradiction between its interests and those of the ancien régime, made it more and more acute. Nevertheless, those who are afraid of the proletariat's revolutionary movement have always been prone to think that gradual improvement in the life of the working class is able to avert the danger and rid society of stormy convulsions. That is why people of this category try to assure themselves and others (and sometimes *only* others) that, with the development of capitalism, the proletariat's condition *improves*, and *with the passage of time it comes closer to the bourgeoisie than it stood at the beginning*. It must be recognised that their conservative instinct prompts in them a consideration

that is not quite erroneous: while a decrease in the distance between the exploiters and the exploited is by no means sufficient to prevent a revolutionary explosion, an *increase* in that distance already holds out to the esteemed conservatives no other prospect but the rapid spread of the "dogmata" of *revolutionary Social-Democracy* among the workers.

But what do we see *in reality*? In what direction do the conditions of the sale of labour power change with the consolidation and development of the capitalist system?

This is a question that vulgar political economy has long been engaged in: it has brought forward a phalanx of "scholars" who are bending every effort to prove that the conditions of the sale of labour power are changing ever more to the advantage of the proletariat, which is getting an ever greater *share* of the national income. Henry Charles Carey, the well-known US economist, lucidly formulated this theory as far back as 1838.* It was borrowed from Carey by the notorious *Bastiat*, whose arguments we must study a little more closely.

In his *Harmonies économiques*, Bastiat assures us that, in its justice and goodness, Providence has prepared a better part for Labour than for Capital.** This pleasant thought is based on the following "unshakeable axiom":

"In proportion to the increase of capital, the *absolute* share of the total product falling to the capitalist is augmented, but his *relative* share is diminished; while, on the contrary, the share of labourer is increased both absolutely and relatively."

To make this "axiom" clearer, Bastiat provides a table, which is quite identical with the one we meet in Carey's *Principles of Social Science*:

	Total product	Share of capital	Share of labour
First period	1,000	500	500
Second period	2,000	800	1,200
Third period	3,000	1,050	1,950
Fourth period	4,000	1,200	2,800

"Such is the grand, admirable, consoling, necessary and *inflexible* law of capital," Bastiat exclaims rapturously. "To demon-

* The Russian reader can get acquainted with Carey's reasoning from his book *Principles of Social Science*, which came out in a Russian translation by Prince Shakhovskoy in 1869. The table on page 506 of this book refers to the question that now interests us.

** *Harmonies*, 2^e édition, p. 206.

strate that means, it would seem, completely discrediting these declamations ... against *the greed and the tyranny* of the most powerful instrument of civilisation and *egalisation* that has emerged from the human faculties.*

The reader will see for himself that it would be most pleasing to prove so admirable and consoling a law but, to his regret, he will have to acknowledge that Bastiat's proofs lack conviction. All his arguments consist in the indication that the percentage accompanying the industrial development of civilised countries is falling. Anyone with the most modest acquaintance with political economy understands that this proof is more than feeble. However, this "brilliant French economist" lacks the time to dwell on proofs. He hastens to go over to the admirable and consoling conclusions that emerge from his admirable and consoling law. "Cease, capitalists and workers," he vociferates, "to regard each other with an eye of defiance and envy! Close your ears to these absurd declamations, whose arrogance is matched only by their ignorance and which, under a promise of prospective philanthropy, begin by encouraging the present discord. Acknowledge that your interests are common and identical, that they converge towards the achievement of the common weal", etc., etc.** This sentimental tirade leaves no room for the least doubt as to why Bastiat has needed the necessary and inflexible law he has borrowed from Carey (without indicating the source): reference to that law would have the aim of reconciling the workers with the capitalists and *undermining the influence of socialism*.

II

Julian Kautz considers Bastiat one of the most outstanding minds engaged during recent years in a study of political economy.*** One cannot agree with this appraisal. Bastiat undoubtedly possessed the ability of clear and perhaps even brilliant exposition, but his *thoughts* were always so *superficial* and his *arguments* so *feeble* that he cannot be considered a brilliant *man of science*. He was nothing more than a brilliant *advocate* of capitalist exploitation. It is his outstanding defence of that exploitation that has ensured him a strong and lengthy influence on very many friends of "social peace". It is in this sense—and only in this—that Julian Kautz is right in calling Bastiat's work important and fruitful.**** Indeed, Bastiat's influence on the economists

* *Harmonies*, 2^e édition, pp. 206-07.

** *ibid.*, p. 209.

*** *Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Nationalökonomie und ihrer Literatur*, II. Theil, Wien, 1860, S. 578.

**** *ibid.*, same page.

of the more or less conservative trend has always been far stronger than is thought by many of those who are amazed by his *admirable* but hardly *consoling* superficiality, even if the latter is necessary in a way. Luigi Cossa has remarked that the influence of the healthy part of Bastiat's ideas has found expression, not so much in the works of his pupils as in the overall trend of the *majority* of our contemporary French economists, as well as of a *considerable part* of their German and Italian counterparts.* By "healthy part" Cossa understands "a rebuttal of the sophistry of the Protectionists and the Socialists". We have already seen that, with Bastiat, all refutation of socialist "sophistries" rests on a flimsy foundation. But that is not the crux of the matter. Cossa is right when he says that Bastiat's *overall trend* continues to live on in the writings of very many economists in various countries. A particularly strong and deep impression was produced by his "admirable" and "necessary" law of the distribution of products between the workers and the capitalists. It is noteworthy that the "discovery" of this law has been ascribed to Bastiat even in the homeland of Carey himself, from whom the French economist undoubtedly borrowed both the law and its exposition. For instance, the eminent American statistician Edward Atkinson has frankly stated that though he has had, in general, little time "for the reading of books or the consideration of theories of wages",** he thinks that Bastiat was the first to found a correct theory of the relations between the interests of the workers and the employers. "Many years ago," he says, "a single phrase in Bastiat's *Harmonies économiques* became engraved upon my mind, and by its application I have been enabled to observe the phenomena of wages in the course of my business life with much clearer insight. It is this: 'In proportion to the increase of capital, the absolute share of the total product falling to the capitalist is augmented, but his relative share is diminished; while, on the contrary, the share of laborer is increased both absolutely and relatively.'""*** Atkinson has borrowed this passage as an epigraph to his essay, "What Makes the Rate of Wages", and, inspired by Bastiat, he has, on the basis of certain data referring to the American iron and steel industry, drawn up a table which, as he puts it, can even be called "*an indicator of progress from poverty of the workman and progress toward poverty of the capitalist*".**** In this new

* *Histoires des doctrines économiques*, Paris, 1899, p. 336.

** [The text in the inverted commas is in English in the original.]

*** *The Distribution of Products or the Mechanism and the Metaphysics of Exchange*, fifth edition, pp. 23-24.

**** *ibid.*, p. 335. [The text in the inverted commas is in English in the original.]

wording, Bastiat's *admirable* law sheds a considerable part of its *consoling nature* by arousing in the reader excessively gloomy misgivings regarding the future fate of the *capitalists* in *capitalist* society. However, the dispassionate scholars, with their ignorance of everything except the interests of pure science, and without being embarrassed by compassion for the poor capitalists, willingly quote from Atkinson's book. Thus we meet with frequent references to it in the book by Professor Schultze-Gävernitz on *Large-Scale Production*, which, according to Mr. P. Struve, is "perhaps the most thorough monographical study of the social history of British industry".* This "thorough study" of the economics of the British cotton industry has led Schultze-Gävernitz to the conviction that although the increase in the overall national product gives to the share of labour and capital as absolutely greater quantities, the participation of capital therein diminishes relatively, while the participation of labour increases relatively. "Labour receives an ever greater share of the entire national product," says Schultze-Gävernitz. "It is beginning more and more to get what is left after the payment of the shares of interest and profits."** This is the selfsame consoling law of Carey-Bastiat, and it is strange that Mr. P. Struve has failed, or not wished, to note this in his preface—in general very poorly reasoned—to Schultze-Gävernitz's book. It is also useless to add that the admirable and consoling law of distribution has led our grave German to the same gratifying conclusions that it once led the frivolous Frenchman to. "The social consequences of the process we have described has consisted in an equalising of opposites in property," Schultze-Gävernitz assures us; "without making the wealthy richer or the indigent poorer, it leads to the reverse, as has been statistically proved in respect of Britain."*** Hence it is very simple to arrive at the inference on "*social peace*", to which Herr Professor had already dedicated a separate two-volume work of research. ****

Herr Schultze-Gävernitz considers it the more necessary to draw his readers' attention to the consoling conclusions he has arrived at because, in his words, the fact of the growing distance between the rich and the poor in the sense attached to it by Marx and Engels is recognised even in circles which in general, come out as decisive opponents of Marxism.***** But in this, he almost

* Gerhart von Schultze-Gävernitz, *Der Grossbetrieb*, translated into Russian by L. B. Krasin, edited and prefaced by P. B. Struve, St. Petersburg, 1897, Preface, p. 1.

** *ibid.*, p. 229.

*** *ibid.*, same page.

**** *Zum sozialen Frieden. Eine Darstellung der sozial-politischen Erziehung des englischen Volks im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1890.

***** *ibid.*, II. Bd., S. 493.

falls into exaggeration. As far as we know, circles hostile to Marxism are ever more becoming imbued with the consoling consciousness of the incontestability and the "necessity" of the Carey-Bastiat law. Practically every self-respecting bourgeois scholar is more than glad if he has any opportunity—in any piece of "scientific" research—to expatiate on the narrowing gap between rich and poor. The "blunting" of the contradiction between the capitalists and the workers is now a theme very much in vogue in bourgeois economic literature.

III

According to Schultze-Gävernitz, the decrease in the distance between the rich and the poor in Britain was proved by that country's "leading statistician" Robert Giffen, in an address "The Increase of Moderate Incomes", supposed to have been given at a meeting of the Royal Statistical Society in December 1887. Schultze Gävernitz made reference to this address both in his *Zum sozialen Frieden* (Vol. II, p. 490) and in his book on *large-scale production* (p. 229 in the Russian translation). But he was mistaken in ascribing it to Giffen. In fact, the address was really given at the meeting mentioned by Schultze-Gävernitz, but it was delivered by Goschen.* This circumstance, of course, in no way impairs the value of the speech itself, but Goschen should not be deprived of the laurels he deserved, which should not be presented to Giffen even by mistake. *Suum cuique!*

The speech on the increase in moderate incomes seemed convincing to many others besides Schultze-Gävernitz. After its delivery (December 6, 1887), Collet, Governor of the Bank of England, expressed warm thanks to the speaker for his having shown the degree in which the hackneyed prattle on the constantly growing enrichment of the wealthy and impoverishment of the poor was contrary to the truth. "Nothing was more valuable in these days of visionary theories and excited propositions for the distribution of wealth," said the esteemed Governor, "than to have it shown in a manner so perspicuous and indisputable, that the distribution which is so ardently called for, is in fact already in active although silent operation, through the regular action of economic laws...." ** However, Mr. Collet's opinion may be considered insufficiently authoritative. Some sceptic may suppose that, like Edward Atkinson, the Governor of the Bank of England did not have

* See: *The Increase of Moderate Incomes*, being the Inaugural Address of the President of the Royal Statistical Society, the Right Honourable G. I. Goschen, in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, December, 1887.

** *Journal of the R.S.S.*, Dec., 1887, Proceedings on the 6th of December, p. 613.

enough time for a study of economic theory, a knowledge of which is, after all, necessary for a correct understanding of statistical data. That is why we shall also mention a well-known German economist, Gustav Schmoller, who, while regarding the writings of a "leading British statistician", viz., Giffen, with a dash of scepticism, yet finds that Goschen's conclusions are based on an objective and convincing analysis of reality.* It would therefore be useful to take a closer look at what the British Chancellor of the Exchequer had to say.

Goschen was in full agreement with Collet in his view on the great social significance of the data he had adduced. "I do not know," he told his audience, "whether the statistics I have brought before you will to any extent have caused the same impression in your minds that they have made on mine. To me it seems that, while some people are crying out for the artificial reconstruction of society a sort of silent socialism is actually in progress. There is a silent movement towards the further distribution of wealth over a larger area, which from whatever point of view it is regarded seems to me to be a matter for national congratulation. No violent specifics have been applied to produce it. The steady working of economic laws, under a system of commercial and industrial freedom, is bringing about the result I have described.... And the best of this automatic socialism is that it appears to operate even in a time of depression. Despite the complaint of absence of profit and of bad times generally; despite want of work and the irregularity in the employment even of those who have work, the great central body of society is strengthening its economic position."**

The reader will see that both Goschen and his audience were under the influence of the "cries for the artificial reconstruction of society". Indeed, such outcries were very loud in Britain at the time Goschen delivered his speech, a time of industrial stagnation and unemployment, which led to disturbances among the workers. Meetings of unemployed were held in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leicester, Yarmouth and elsewhere, with incendiary speeches being made. There were some who thought then that Britain was *on the eve of social revolution*. Some people, says Sidney Webb, even specified the time of the forthcoming revolution: 1889, the hundredth anniversary of the Great French Revolution.*** This foment in minds could be soothing neither to the ministers

* *Was verstehen wir unter dem Mittelstande? Hat er im 19. Jahrhundert zu-oder abgenommen?*, Göttingen, 1897, S. 27. Mention of Goschen's speech is also made by Robert Meier in his *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, Zweite Aufl., 2. Bd., S. 366.

** *Journal of the R.S.S.*, Dec. 1887, p. 604.

*** *Socialism: True and False*, Fabian²⁷⁰ Tract, No. 51, p. 3.

nor to the upper classes in general, so it should be admitted that Goschen was speaking at a time when the conditions hardly favoured "objective research" into economic phenomena. It is also well known, however, that love of truth sometimes gains the upper hand over formidable external obstacles. Though Goschen probably found it very hard to preserve his moral calm and scientific impartiality, this does not yet mean that he had to get worked up and see Britain's economic development through the prism of his class prejudices. Who knows? Perhaps the "automatic socialism" discovered by him is indeed penetrating more and more into British social life? The question however is: *on what actual foundation did the British minister's confidence in the slow, silent but steady development of that socialism rest?*

The actual foundation of that confidence was the following: the statistics told him that, in 1875, the number of (physical and juridical) persons registered under Schedule D* and in receipt of incomes of between £ 150 and £ 1,000 reached 317,839, while in 1886 the number *increased* to 379,004, i.e., went up by 19.26 per cent. During the same period, the number of persons with incomes of £ 1,000 or more *fell* from 22,848 (1877) to 22,298 (1886), a *fall* of 2.4 per cent. A more detailed analysis of the statistics enabled Goschen to draw up the following table:

	1877	1886	Per cent increase or decrease
Between £150 and £500 . . .	285,754	347,021	+21.4
" £500 and £1,000 . . .	32,085	32,033	nil
" £1,000 and £5,000 . . .	19,726	19,250	-2.5
Over £5,000	3,122	3,048	-2.3

Hence Goschen concluded that "during ordinary times, and during times of depression, during times such as we have recently gone through and which certainly have not been times of great prosperity, there has yet been a most satisfactory and steady increase in the number of incomes below £ 1,000."

But under Schedule D, British income tax statistics do not register all those who can be referred to the middle class. Quite

* Under this heading were registered incomes obtained from industrial and commercial business, from capitals invested in foreign and colonial undertakings, and from the liberal professions. Non-periodic cash revenues were also registered under this heading.

a number of such persons also register under Schedule E, which includes, besides officials in the public service, also persons employed privately or with companies. The number of persons under this schedule rose from 78,224 to 115,964 during the decade under review. In Goschen's opinion, this growth also testified to the strengthening of the economic position of "the great central body of society", i.e., the middle class.

These figures are no doubt interesting on the theoretical plane but they do not in any way have the significance ascribed to them by Goschen.

In the first place, as already pointed out by Mr. Isayev, the data for the decade 1877-1886 showed a fall in the number of big incomes. "The sharp fall in the prices of all commodities; the lower profits of all enterprises to half of the average level, or less; the vast number of bankruptcies (up to 1877, an average of 8,500 bankruptcies per year; between 1877 and 1884—over 12,000)—all these led to a large number of wealthy persons with incomes of between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000 in the mid-seventies receiving hardly more than £ 500-£ 1,000, while those with incomes of over £ 500 descended to a lower group, i.e., of those with incomes of between £ 150 and £ 500."*

How the industrial depression affected the growth of Britain's national wealth is shown by the following figures: in the years between 1865 and 1875, Britain's aggregate capital rose from £ 6,113,000 thousand to £ 8,548,000 thousand, i.e., a 40 per cent increase; in the years between 1875 and 1885, it rose from £ 8,500,000 thousand to £ 10,037,000 thousand, i.e., increased only by 17.5 per cent.**

It will readily be understood that the slower rate of capital accumulation was caused by a fall in the level of profits during the industrial depression. This fall in the level of profits was alone sufficient to transfer income-tax payers from higher schedules to lower ones. But it is noteworthy that the lower level of profits was far from the same in various kinds of enterprises. It was felt with special force in *industrial enterprises* and was far weaker in those *unrelated* directly to industry. Thus, retailers had very few complaints to make. Low losses were also incurred by those who had invested their capital abroad, for instance in foreign loans and the like. One of the members of the Commission appointed to inquire into the depression of industry pointed out*** that

* A. A. Исаев, «Начало политической экономии», 4^е изд. стр. 619. [Foundations of Political Economy. Fourth ed., p. 619.]

** R. Giffen, "Accumulation of Capital in the United Kingdom", *Journal of the R.S.S.*, March 1890, p. 151.

*** See *Final Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Depression of Trade and Industry*, the opinion of the minority on the Commission, p. XLII.

British capital investments abroad were one of the causes of a phenomenon that appeared strange at first glance, namely, that the total sum of taxable incomes had grown, despite the business depression. Since the growth of this overall sum was nevertheless accompanied by a fall in big incomes, it was to be surmised that capital of relatively smaller size had been invested in trading concerns both within the country and abroad. Such was the opinion of the minority on the Commission. The great increase in the number of low incomes and a fall in a number of large incomes under Schedule *D* probably took place in considerable measure because industry, to which large enterprises with big capital belong, did not produce incomes, while trade, especially retail trade, the greater part of which is conducted with small capital, yielded profits.*

In view of these considerations alone, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer's "automatic socialism" loses a considerable part of its "admirable" and "consoling" qualities. But it seems even more pitiful to us if we remember that *another cause* of the growth in the total of taxable incomes (Schedule *D*) was simply *more thorough governmental assessment of private incomes*. The majority of the Commission were in full agreement with the minority in indicating this cause, but while the majority did not ask themselves how it had affected the number of registered persons with "moderate" incomes, the minority pointed out with good reason that it should have *increased that number* as a result of the income-taxing of many *new* taxpayers of modest means, who had previously had no difficulty in declining the honour.**

Thus, the actual foundation of the gratifying conclusions drawn by Goschen is quite groundless. Just as groundless, of course, is the gratifying conviction of those friends of "social peace" who think that Goschen has proved the narrowing of the distance between poor and rich.

We would ask the reader also to note the following. Goschen had high praise for the concluding report, quoted by us, which studied the causes of the depression in industry, and voiced regret that the conclusions it had arrived at did not attract due attention from the reading public.*** It might have been thought that he himself had made a thorough study of those conclusions and conveyed them to his audience in all their fullness and variety. In fact, however, the reverse was true. So trifling was his attitude to the report in question, that he found it possible to unreservedly make use of statistics concerning which the Commission minority

* *ibid.*, p. XLIX. The comparatively good state of trade was the result of a tremendous fall in factory prices.

** *ibid.*, p. L.

*** *Journal of the R.S.S.*, Dec., 1887, p. 591.

had stated forthright that their significance was not what it had seemed at first sight and was ascribed to them by Goschen himself shortly after the publication of the Final Report. The "worthy" speaker found it discreet to make no mention of this statement of the minority in his speech, so firm and inflexible was his "objectivity".

Goschen wished to hearten his audience, who were under the strong impression of the workers' disturbances; clutching at the first figures that had come to hand, he began to set forth to them, in a new version, the very theory that had previously been brought forward by Carey, Bastiat and similar apologists of capitalism. The delighted listeners thanked the speaker in most heartfelt fashion. Continental scholars like Schmoller and Schultze-Gävernitz were overjoyed too. These "objective" men of science were not concerned with any critical verification of the arguments brought forward by the British Minister, for they, too, were delighted to hear that the admirable and consoling Bastiat law could be backed by a new data. Since Goschen's reasoning was met respectfully by Schmoller, Schultze-Gävernitz and other "scholars", the "critics" of Marxism had no other choice than to proclaim from the houses that social contradictions had been blunted as a result of the "growth of moderate incomes". Our "critics" do not at all engage in criticising bourgeois scholars; they specialise in "criticising" Marx alone.

IV

Goschen himself was aware that the data his report was based on in respect of the successes of "automatic socialism" were lacking in proof, which was why he tried to back them with the aid of indirect considerations. We shall learn of one of the latter when we deal with the condition of the working class in Britain; we shall now consider some of the rest.

"Year by year," says Goschen, "it would seem, a larger number of persons are becoming shareholders in companies, and thus participating in the wealth which arises from the vast industrial and commercial activity of the country..."*

Taken up by Schultze-Gävernitz and other adherents of "social peace", this consideration, as is common knowledge, produced a profound impression on some socialists. Thus, Herr Bernstein came to the conclusion that "the form taken by the joint-stock company has considerably countered the trend towards the centralisation of capital through the centralisation of production". He thinks that "if economists opposed to socialism have used this

* *Journal of the R.S.S.*, Dec., 1887, p. 597.

fact with the aim of embellishing the present social relations, it does not follow that socialists should conceal or deny the fact. It is more a question of admitting its actual significance and spread.*

To conceal the facts or to deny their existence when have been proved is, of course, quite ridiculous and absolutely absurd. But *facts* are one thing and their *social significance* is something else. The social significance of the fact indicated by Herr Bernstein who follows in the footsteps of Goschen and Schultze-Gavernitz, can be understood in a variety of ways. Bourgeois scholars and Herr Bernstein, who is trailing behind them, have not noticed that the spread of joint-stock companies may be—and indeed is—a *new factor in the centralising of property and the growth of the distance between the poor and the rich*. We shall illustrate our thought with an example taken from the economic history of the same period that is dealt with in Goschen's speech.

It is common knowledge that the increase in the number of joint-stock companies in Britain was greatly facilitated by the Limited Liability Acts. By the time the Commission appointed to study the causes of the depression in industry had begun its deliberations, the economic consequences of the new laws had made themselves felt with sufficient clarity. Let us see what the Commission had to say about them.

According to the majority of its members, limited liability led to a less cautious and more speculative management of enterprises than that to which the entrepreneur may have been inclined when he was fully liable for his operations. In consequence, limited liability in production led to a fall in profits under which the ordinary entrepreneur would have felt obliged to curtail its extent. Even the loss of capital caused by the failure of a considerable number of such companies did not exert the influence that might have been expected in the sense of a reduction in their operations, since the losses were spread over a larger number of persons and were therefore less felt. Moreover, on the wreckage of enterprises that had foundered there are constantly arising new ones which, after the purchase of the property of old ones for a song, are able to conduct production on the former scale.**

The minority members were in full agreement, in this case, with the majority. In their opinion, limited liability had led to the appearance of a special class of promoters who, taking advantage of the inexperience and defencelessness of owners of

* Э. Бернштейн, «Исторический материализм», 2-е изд., стр. 84, translated into Russian by Kantzel. [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation of E. Bernstein's *Historical Materialism*.]

** *Final Report*, p. XVIII.

small sums of money, floated enterprises with the exclusive purpose of selling off their own shares at the first opportunity, without the least concern for the fate of the companies they had launched.*

We do not think that this kind of "automatic socialism" was capable of considerably promoting the "blunting" of social contradictions. *Over-production and speculation* have always been and will remain powerful factors in ruining the economically weak and enriching a handful of slick businessmen skilled in fishing in muddy waters.

Goschen also spoke of the larger savings-bank deposits during the period under review, considering them a manifestation of the slow but sure triumph of the "silent socialism" he holds so dear.** But had he carefully perused the Report he insistently recommended to his audience's attention, he would have had to agree that the fact he had adduced permitted another and far less "consoling" interpretation. As so correctly remarked by A. O'Connor, a member of the Commission, who registered a dissident opinion, the *growth in the number of savings-bank deposits* might have been caused by *fewer opportunities* (as a consequence of the depression in industry) *to invest small sums in industrial enterprises**** In view of this more than probable explanation of the fact, one can readily understand that the increasing total of savings-bank deposits *went hand in hand with a fall in the demand for industrial workers*.

However "silent" and "automatic" this kind of socialism is, it always contains little that is *consoling*.

We can now leave Goschen for a while and address ourselves to another British expert, this time to the statistician *Michael Mulhall*.

In his *Dictionary of Statistics*, Mulhall cites the following figures regarding the growth in the number of incomes of £2,000 or upwards.****

Year	Number	Per million population
1812	39,765	3,314
1850	65,389	3,115
1860	85,530	2,949
1870	130,375	4,206
1880	210,430	6,313

* *Final Report*, p. LVII.

** *Journal*, Dec., 1887, p. 602.

*** *Final Report*, p. LXXII.

**** The figures referring to the years before 1860 are for Great Britain; after 1860—for the United Kingdom.

The number of persons enjoying incomes of over £ 5,000 a year increased as follows:

Year	Number	Per million population
1812	409	34
1850	1,181	56
1860	1,558	53
1870	2,080	67
1880	2,954	88

Taking the relative numbers of each class to the whole population, we find:

Persons of	per million inhabitants		Rate of increase
	1860	1880	
great wealth	53	88	66 per cent
easy fortune	2,949	6,313	112 "

"This shows," says Mulhall, "a greater diffusion of wealth, contrary to the common impression that 'the rich are getting richer every day'... ."*

All this is very fine and most consoling. But when we meet with the selfsame Mulhall elsewhere and under different circumstances, we learn things that are far less fine and far less comforting.

On the basis of certain calculations, he accepts that wealth in the United Kingdom is distributed as follows:

Class	Number of persons	Millions £	£ per head
Rich	327,000	9,120	28,000
Middle	2,380,000	2,120	900
Working	18,210,000	556	31
Children	17,940,000	—	—
Population	38,857,000	11,806	302

* *Dictionary*, p. 321.

What are these figures indicative of? They show the following. "Nearly 80 per cent of the total wealth is held by $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the adult population. The middle class stands for 11 per cent of population, and holds 18 per cent of wealth."* Mulhall has nothing to say of the working class, for the crumbs falling to its share are so miserably small! It follows that the "diffusion of wealth" is not so great as Mulhall would assure us. A pity, a great pity, for we were on the verge of arriving at a very pleasant state of mind. But let us now see what else our statistician has to say. Let us ask him how that "diffusion of wealth" operated in the past.**

According to his own calculation,*** it appears that, if we take the number of fortunes of over £ 5,000 in the year 1840 as one hundred, we find that in 1877 that number rose to 223, and in 1893 to 270. Yet if we take as one hundred the number of fortunes between £ 100 and £ 5,000 in 1840, we find that the number increased only to 203 in 1877 and to 249 in 1893. That means that "fortunes over £ 5,000 are multiplying much faster than those under £ 5,000, which is the reverse of what is desirable and this congestion" (*in the upper classes.*—G.P.) "seems to increase in intensity the higher we go".**** Some "diffusion"! Mulhall himself seems to be somewhat taken aback and therefore hastens to comfort us with the following table:

	1840	1877	1893
Population . .	100	126	146
Possessing over £100	100	205	251

While the population increased by 40 per cent in fifty years, the number of persons possessing over £ 100 went up by 151 per cent. "...In other words, the class of society which may be considered above the reach of want has grown since 1840 three times faster than the general population."*****

* Michael G. Mulhall, *Industries and Wealth of Nations*, London, 1896, p. 100.

** The preceding conclusions are based on data referring to five years ending December 1893.

*** Below we shall see that this calculation is a feeble expression of the actual course of development.

**** *ibid.*, pp. 100-01.

***** *ibid.* p. 101.

Below we shall analyse in detail the consoling nature of all this comfort; for the time being, we shall draw the reader's attention to Mulhall's following opinion regarding the condition of the working class in Britain.

"The improved condition of the working classes is evident from the increased number of depositors in savings banks; it was less than 4 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom in 1850, and has now risen to 19 per cent. Nevertheless, the sufferings of the indigent class in our large towns are greater than ever before; the condition of this class has been aptly described as far worse than that of Hottentots."*

What a ludicrous descent *from the elevated to the trivial*.

V

We can now see that both Goschen's "silent socialism" and Mulhall's "diffusion of wealth" are something out of this world. Mulhall himself has had to admit that there is an ever greater congestion of wealth in the upper reaches of society. But if that is so, then, regarded from their economic aspect, *social contradictions, far from becoming "blunted", are increasing more and more*. Mulhall tries to "blunt" this conclusion by pointing out that the number of persons in Britain possessing fortunes in excess of £ 100 is growing far more rapidly than the population is. It would be timely to take a closer look at this sham consolation.

Let us imagine a society made up of three classes: the wealthy, the well-to-do, and the poor. Let us imagine, for the sake of simplicity, that the poor class live exclusively *by the sale of their labour*, the well-to-do engage *in trade*, while the wealthy consist of *capitalist entrepreneurs and landowners*; the poor class total *one thousand*, the well-to-do, *one hundred*, and the wealthy, *ten persons*.** In the distribution of social income, the share of each of these classes is a magnitude we shall denote as *A*. Consequently, society's aggregate income equals *3A*; *on the average*, a member of the wealthy class is *ten times as rich* as any member of the well-to-do class, any member of which, in his turn, is ten times as rich as one belonging to the poor class. Such is the *relative* condition of classes in a particular period, say 1875.

Twenty-five years have passed. The social income *has doubled*, so that the share of *each* social class is now *2 A instead of the previous 1 A**** We can now say that the economic prosperity of each class of society *has doubled*. However, the *relationship*

* *ibid.*, pp. 101-02.

** A *person* is the head of a household and recipient of a definite income.

*** To simplify our calculation, we shall first assume that the population has not grown during that period.

between these classes has remained unchanged: just as before, the rich man is, on the average, ten times as wealthy as the well-to-do man, while the latter's fortune averages ten times as much as the possessions of the poor man. Consequently, we have no right to speak either of a "diffusion of wealth" in our society, or of "automatic socialism" as changing the distribution of incomes in the sense of blunting the contradictions between the social classes. We shall proceed, keeping this conclusion in mind.

Let us suppose that income tax exists in our society, payable by all persons with incomes of £ 100 or more. Let us also suppose that the wealthy and the well-to-do classes do not contain a single person with an income below £ 100, while there is not a single person in the poor class, whose income reaches that figure. Consequently, no person in the latter class paid income tax in 1875.

But how will matters stand 25 years hence, when the aggregate income of each class of society has doubled?

If we suppose, in the first place that, 25 years ago, there were 250 persons in the poor class, who annually received between £ 50 and £ 100, and, in the second place, the *distribution of wealth within each class remained constant*, we shall now have, in the poor class, 250 persons receiving between £ 100 and £ 200, and consequently liable to income tax. Thus the number of poor income-tax payers *will increase though no "diffusion of wealth" has taken place* since the rich man will be ten times as wealthy as the well-to-do person, and the latter will still be ten times as rich as the poor man.

However, in what degree will the number of poor income-tax payers increase?

That, of course, will depend on the distribution of wealth within the well-to-do class. Let us suppose that 25 years ago that class contained 25 persons with annual incomes of between £ 500 and £ 1,000. In that case, these 25 persons will be receiving—after the *doubling* of that class's income (with the distribution of that income remaining unchanged)—between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000. Assuming that persons in receipt of over £ 1,000 can be called *big* payers, we shall see that the *category* of such payers will now be joined by 25 persons belonging to the *middle class*. Consequently, the total number of modest payers (in other words, the total number of "moderate incomes"*) will now be 325 (75 remaining from the former number—100, and 250 new incomes formerly belonging to the working class), i.e., it *will now have increased by 225 per cent.*

Let us continue our calculations. Twenty-five persons of the trading class, who receive between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000, will

* [The words in inverted commas are in English in the original.] .1

now figure in the lists of big payers, in the same *category* as persons in the upper class consisting of industrialists and landowners. These formerly numbered *ten*. By adding to them 25 persons from the *middle class*, we find that the number of big payers now totals 35—an increase of 250 per cent.

The number of big payers has grown somewhat faster than that of the “moderates”, but it will easily be seen that, with some change in our hypothetical figures, we shall arrive at an opposite result.

Indeed, let us assume that we had only ten persons receiving from £ 500 to £ 1,000 in 1875. Twenty-five years later, with the doubling of the income of the middle class, these ten persons will be receiving between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000 and will therefore join the big payers of income tax. Adding their number to that of the former big payers, who, as we remember, also totalled ten, we shall find that we now have twenty such payers in this category, which means that *their number has grown only by 100 per cent.* In view of the far more rapid growth in the number of “moderate” payers, we are now in a position to vociferate about “automatic socialism” and to evoke in uncritical “critics” the idea that the Marxist “dogma” is obsolete, and so on. In actual fact, however, there has been no “diffusion of wealth” since each social class receives its *former share* of the national income.

We shall arrive at exactly the same “gratifying” conclusion—in the Goschen sense—by assuming that the concentration of property in the class of industrialists and landowners has taken place more rapidly than in the trading class, which is quite possible—and even highly probable—without casting any aspersions on the Marxist “dogma”.*

Until now we have assumed that, with the growth of the national income, the *share* of each social class has remained unchanged. Let us now see how the *uneven growth of the incomes of the various classes* would be reflected in the lists of income-tax payers.

Let us suppose that the social income *has quadrupled* and is distributed as follows: the working class gets 2A; the middle class, 4A,¹ and the upper class, 6A. When the working class’s income

* “The retail trade is today passing through an industrial revolution similar to that which manufacture experienced in the early years of this century and the small Keeper is the analogue of the handloom weaver,” says H. W. Macrosty in his interesting book, *The Growth of Monopoly in English Industry* (Fabian Tract, No. 88, p. 3). [This passage is in English in the original.] Today, when the petty tradesman is passing through an “industrial revolution”, concentration will proceed apace in that retail trade, as is borne out by Macrosty’s booklet. But until the retail trade was affected by the “industrial revolution”, concentration could not but have taken place in it far more slowly than in industry. This circumstance, too, must have influenced the growth of “moderate” incomes.

doubles, that class will include—just as in our former assumption—two hundred and fifty persons in receipt of incomes of £ 100 or more. These persons will now have to pay income tax, thus increasing the number of “moderate” payers. Previously the middle class wholly belonged to this “moderate” bracket, but now, when the income of the middle class has quadrupled, a considerable number of its members will go over into the bracket of big payers. How great will that number be? If we assume that the middle class formerly contained twenty-five persons getting between £ 250 and £ 500, now each of these twenty-five persons (given an *unchanged distribution* of middle-class quadrupled incomes among its members) will be getting between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000, i.e., will cross the line separating the *modest* from the *big* payers of income tax. However, the same class also contained, according to our former assumption, twenty-five persons with incomes of between £ 500 and £ 1,000. With the income of the middle class quadrupled, these persons will now be getting between £ 2,000 and £ 4,000 each, and will therefore be included with greater reason among the *big* payers. Consequently, only fifty members of the middle class (100 minus 25, minus 25) will remain within the bracket of “moderate” payers. By adding the number of such persons to the number (250) of payers of modest means from the *lower class* we shall find that the total number of payers of modest means is now 300 (50 plus 250); *it has gone up by 200 per cent.*

If we go over to the *schedule* of big payers, we shall see that, to their former number of *ten*, we must now add another 50 (twenty-five persons with incomes of between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000, and another twenty-five whose incomes range from £ 2,000 to £ 4,000). The total number, consequently, will be 60; *it will have gone up by 500 per cent.*

If we assume that *concentration* will reduce the number of modest payers to 250, and the number of big payers to 55, it will follow that the aggregate of “moderate” incomes has gone up by 150 per cent, and of big incomes, by 450 per cent.

All this reasoning of ours, however, has not taken into account the *population growth*. The population may grow 1) more rapidly than the social income; 2) just as rapidly, or 3) more slowly than the social income. We are concerned here only with the *third instance*, which is in keeping with capitalist reality. Let us consider that instance.

We shall assume that the number of members of our society has doubled in the space of fifty years, whereas the social income *has quadrupled*, and now equals 12A, with the working class getting 2A, the middle class, 4A, and the upper class, 6A. Since the doubled income of the working class is now distributed among a double number of persons, it follows that (with the distribu-

tion of incomes *within* that class unchanged) the prosperity of each individual worker will not increase, which means that *no stratum of the working class will join the ranks of the payers of income tax.*

Things will be different with the middle class: here the income has quadrupled while the number of persons has only doubled. Consequently, each person will be *twice as wealthy* as previously. The number of persons in receipt of incomes of between £ 1,000 and £ 2,000 will have now reached 50. The latter will now belong to the schedule of *big* payers, the remaining 150 (200 minus 50) remaining in the schedule of *modest* incomes. *The number of "moderate" incomes will thus have increased by 50 per cent.*

The *upper class* formerly contained ten payers, who were of course in the *upper bracket*. The doubling of the population has increased their number to twenty, to which should be added another fifty persons of the *middle class*, who have now joined the *upper bracket*. The total is now 70 (20 plus 50); it has *gone up by 600 per cent.*

Even if we suppose that the concentration of property has reduced the number of big payers to 55, we are nevertheless confronted by the fact of a vast increase in the number of big payers: an increase of up to 450 per cent.

What is proved by all these examples, which have probably palled on the reader?

Among other things, these examples prove the following:

1) *The growth in the number of payers of modest means—this as a result of the increase in the social income—does not of itself testify to the "diffusion of wealth" or to the successes of "automatic socialism", inasmuch as it is quite compatible with a vast growth of inequality in the distribution of social wealth.*

2) *The greater the concentration of property in the upper class of society, the more salient is the growth in the number of payers of modest means. In certain cases, the number of "moderate incomes" will grow more rapidly than the number of big incomes, despite the simultaneous and very considerable growth of social inequality.*

3) In present-day capitalist societies, the number of moderate incomes is increasing more rapidly than the overall size of the population. However, to infer therefrom that wealth has become diffused and social inequality has decreased would mean revealing a total and shameful lack of understanding of the matter. For a proper realisation of how the national income is distributed in present-day societies, one should first determine *in what measure that income has grown in the period under consideration, and how its accretion has been divided among the separate classes.* Those who speak of the diffusion of wealth and compare the growth of the

population with the growing number of moderate incomes have contributed absolutely nothing to that determination.*

Their arguments will therefore reveal nothing except their own feebleness.

If we glance from the point of view of these conclusions at the data provided by Mulhall in his *Dictionary of Statistics*, we shall readily understand how and why those data can exist cheek by jowl with data which obviously have a diametrically opposite significance.

Mulhall says that the number of persons in Britain with property in excess of £ 100 is growing far more rapidly than the population. That is very true, but Mulhall does not ask himself how rapidly Britain's national income is growing. In fact, that income is growing far more rapidly than the number of persons in the bracket indicated by Mulhall, which is why the *growth of that number goes hand in hand with the far more rapid increase of social inequality*. That is borne out most explicitly by the data provided by the selfsame Mulhall in his book *Industries and the Wealth of Nations*. True, the data he gives in his *Dictionary of Statistics* seem to show that "moderate" incomes are growing far more rapidly in Britain than the big ones; however, we already know, in the first place, that even if that were the case, it would still be a far cry from the "diffusion of wealth"; in the second place, we know that the second half of the seventies was marked by a deep industrial depression which temporarily led to a decline in big incomes, and consequently to a temporary fall in their number. We therefore understand how and why a comparison of figures referring to 1860 on the one hand, and to 1880 on the other, are indicative of the more rapid growth in the number of moderate incomes as against big ones. But if we compare the overall results of economic development over a longer period, we shall see that, despite temporary setbacks, the big incomes grew far more rapidly in number than did the moderate ones. Indeed, the Mulhall table we have cited shows that, in 1812, there were 3,314 persons per 1,000,000 inhabitants in Britain with incomes in excess of £ 200; in 1880, they numbered 6,313, i.e., their total had *not even doubled*, whereas the number of persons with incomes of over £ 5,000 rose from 34 in 1812 to 88 in 1880: it *went up* by 163.6 per cent.

* See, for instance, Э. Бернштейн, «Исторический материализм», стр. 87. et seq. [Historical Materialism]. Last year, Luigi Negri brought out a work specially devoted to the question of concentration in capitalist society (*La centralizzazione capitalistica*, Torino, 1900). In it, all the causes *slowing down* concentration are carefully enumerated. It is strange, however, that he makes no mention of causes that *camouflage* it. However, such causes do exist, the chief of them being the rapid amassment of wealth in the upper strata of society.

These figures completely disprove Mulhall's talk of the diffusion of social wealth, and fully bear him out when he says that "fortunes over £ 5,000 are multiplying much faster than those under £ 5,000" (see above, p. 528).

"Figures themselves never lie", said Goschen in the address we have referred to above, "but every one must admit that there is no sound and accurate material which can be so easily handled for the special purposes of the compiler as statistics can...." In this case, we are in full agreement with Goschen: indeed, figures do not lie....

VI

In our example, we had recourse to hypothetical figures. We shall now address ourselves to reality.

We shall ask the reader to pay special attention to the following figures, which show the growth of income in various brackets in Britain between the years 1843 and 1879-80:

Incomes in £	1843	1879-80
Between 500 and 5,000	17,990	42,927
" 5,000 and 10,000	493	1,439
" 10,000 and 50,000	200	785
50,000		
or more	8	68

The number of persons with incomes of between £ 500 and £ 5,000 *more than doubled*; the number with incomes of between £ 5,000 and £ 10,000 *almost trebled*; the number of rich men pocketing between £ 10,000 and £ 50,000 a year *almost quadrupled*; last, the number of millionaires with annual incomes of £ 50,000 or more *increased eightfold*.*

Thus there can be no doubt: *inequality* in the distribution of Britain's national income went up considerably in the period mentioned above. Consequently, the "diffusion of wealth" is nothing more than a "pious" falsehood.

True, the number of persons with incomes of between £ 150 and £ 500 *more than trebled* during the same period. It follows that the number of payers *in this* bracket—the most modest

* See Supplement A to a highly interesting note by Miss E. Simcox, "Loss or Gain of the Working Classes During the Nineteenth Century", published in the *Proceedings of the Industrial Remuneration Conference*, London, pp. 96-97.

of the lot—grew more rapidly than did the number of payers in the two immediately following schedules, and lagged behind only the fourth (£ 10,000-£ 50,000) and the fifth (£ 50,000 or more) schedules.* Given some good will, one might say, in this connection, several words on the diffusion of wealth in the medium strata of payers. But we shall not be put out of countenance by such words, for now we are already well aware that the phenomenon we have indicated could have been caused by a multitude of causes with *absolutely no relation to the "diffusion of wealth"*. Besides, we have before us the fact of the far more rapid growth in the number of payers in the two upper brackets. Consequently, the increase in social inequality leaves absolutely no room for doubt.**

We see the same increase in other capitalist countries as well.

Between the years 1848 and 1885, fortunes of various magnitude in the *Canton of Zurich* increased as follows:

Size of fortunes	1848	1885	Growth, per cent
From 5,000 to 50,000 fr. (approx.)	9,100	17,000	90
" 50,000 to 500,000 " "	930	2,650	185
Over 500,000 fr. " "	30	190	530

In Basle, Glarus, Bremen, Hamburg, the Kingdom of Saxony, and Prussia, one could see the same relation between figures expressing the growth of fortunes of various magnitude.

In the period between 1879 and 1890, the number of incomes in excess of 9,600 marks rose by 100 per cent in the Kingdom of Saxony, while the number of incomes above 100,000 marks went up by 228 per cent.***

* In 1843, the number of payers in the lowest bracket was 87,946; in 1879-80 it reached 274,943.

** The figures we have quoted *refute* Goschen to such a degree that we will not tire the reader by engaging in a detailed analysis of the significance of the fact brought forward by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, namely, that the number of incomes under Schedule E increased sharply between 1875 and 1886. We shall only say that the growth of capitalism of necessity presupposes a growth in the number of *employees* both of private persons and joint-stock companies. But it is this that leads to the increase in social inequality; it is this that leads to *big* incomes growing, on the whole, far more rapidly than "*moderate*" ones.

*** See *Wirtschaftliche Grundbegriffe* by Neumann in Schönberg's *Handbuch der Politischen Oekonomie*, I. Bd., 4. Auflage, S. 186, Anhang. "In general," says Böhmerth, "the Saxon statistics give reason to admit that although middle-class incomes of between 2,100 (2,200) and 9,500 (9,600) marks grow considerably in the absolute sense, their percentage of the overall incomes

We also have an amazing table from Engel, referring to *Prussia*. Between the years 1845 and 1873, the number of payers in various schedules rose as follows:

The number of payers rose:

In Bracket	One	1,000-	1,600	thalers by	110.2	per cent
" "	Two	1,600-	3,200	" "	132.3	" "
" "	Three	3,200-	6,000	" "	153.9	" "
" "	Four	6,000-	12,000	" "	224.8	" "
" "	Five	12,000-	24,000	" "	370.6	" "
" "	Six	24,000-	52,000	" "	476.3	" "
" "	Seven	52,000-	100,000	" "	468.4	" "
" "	Eight	100,000-	200,000	" "	433.3	" "
" "	Nine	200,000	or more	" "	2,000.0	" " *

On all sides you will see one and the same thing: the actual advance in all countries of the capitalist world follows the same direction as in our hypothetical society: *the number of payers in the upper brackets grows everywhere at an incomparably more rapid rate than the number of payers of modest means*. The results obtained through observation of reality *coincide amazingly* with those we obtained when we surmised that *the increase in the social income does not improve the condition of the working class*. In many cases, however, reality *greatly outstrips* our hypothetical example, in which the difference in the growth of the number of payers of various categories is far lower than in Prussia (according to Engel's table) or at least in the Canton of Zurich. That is probably because our example did not sufficiently take into account the concentration of property in the less wealthy strata of society. It is quite possible that, in reality, such concentration greatly slows down the growth in the number of "moderate" incomes.

In short, the nature of our example is in full keeping with the actual state of affairs in capitalist society. However, our example was based on the surmise that *the distribution of social income among the various classes of society becomes ever more uneven*. Obviously, that is what takes place in reality.

But if that is so, then all the rant on the blunting of social contradictions, the diffusion of wealth, the "impoverishment" of the capitalists and the "enrichment" of the working people is a bitter mockery of a class that so keenly feels the existence of

falls quite considerably. Thus, we seem to have here the same course of development that might be established for medium-size production on the basis of imperial statistics" (*Die Vertheilung des Einkommens in Preussen und Sachsen*, Dresden, 1898, S. 12).

* *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 2. Auflage, II. Band, S. 36.

social inequality. The doctrine of Carey-Bastiat and their offspring—Goschen, Schultze-Gävernitz and their ilk, is nothing more than artful but unconvincing talk by advocates of a cause which, at least in principle, is a lost one.

VII

Having seen the truth of the above, we can now turn our attention to Mr. P. Struve.

How does this most estimable "critic" regard the Carey-Bastiat doctrine?

The article he has published in Braun's *Archiv* contains passages which provide definite grounds to at least give a reply to the question of what he thinks of the latest variety of the doctrine, i.e., that "diffusion of wealth" which Goschen, Schultze-Gävernitz and Co. have clutched out of thin air. Here is one of those passages.

As is common knowledge, Marx affirmed that, with the development of capitalism and the higher productivity of labour, the *rate of surplus value*, and consequently the degree of the exploitation of the workers' labour by the capitalist, *rises*. Mr. P. Struve has the following to say on that thought:

"But it is this proposition that is so hard to bring into accord with the facts. It was probably true, on the whole, in respect of the initial stage of the development of large-scale capitalism (the initial triumph of machine production). But it cannot be stated that a higher degree of exploitation was to be seen at the later stages and will continue into the indefinite future. The thing is that the rate of surplus value can rise only when, for some reason, wages fall or surplus value grows. However, lower wages cannot be called a characteristic feature of the most recent economic development in the capitalist countries. Besides lower wages, surplus value can be increased either by longer working hours or greater intensity of labour. However, we cannot speak of longer working hours in the capitalist countries.... The reverse is rather to be seen. A greater intensity of labour indeed exists, but, in the first place, that increase is often linked, for physiological causes, with higher wages, and, in the second place, it often comes up against an impassable boundary. That is why the doctrine of a constant rise in the rate of surplus value or in the degree of the exploitation of labour in developing capitalist society seems groundless to me. One can, with considerable success, defend the reverse thesis, which does not in fact contradict the general character of recent economic development."*

* *Brauns Archiv*, XIV Band V, und VI. Heft 1, 694.

That "reverse thesis" is that very "thesis" which has been brought forward by the present renovators of the Carey-Bastiat doctrine. We have already seen how totally bankrupt that thesis is. By showing the *growing* inequality in the distribution of national income, we have thereby proved that the *share* of that income going to the working class *decreases*. Having coped with the "*originals*", we could very well dispense with the "*copy*", and limit ourselves to simply establishing the more or less consoling and admirable circumstance that it is a very faithful replica which reveals a strong resemblance to the originals. But since we must, at least in part, follow in the steps of our "critic", we must also examine his arguments. Besides, we have to admit that, till now, Marx's idea of the greater degree of the capitalist's exploitation of the worker has been confirmed by us only *indirectly*, and only through mention of the growing inequality in the distribution of social wealth. Let us now see whether any *direct* arguments in favour of that idea can be advanced.

As we have seen, that is impossible, in Mr. P. Struve's opinion. He claims that Marx's idea can be considered correct only in respect of the initial stage of the development of capitalism. That, however, is quite untrue.

Let us take the United States of America where, for very many reasons, the terms on which the proletariat sell their labour power are far more favourable to them than in any European country. How has the *share* of that country's working class changed in respect of the value created by its labour?

In 1840, that share was 51 per cent, which fell to 45 per cent in 1890, consequently, *the working class's smaller share was accompanied by a rise in the degree of its exploitation by the capitalists.*

These figures are taken from Carol D. Wright, who, despite all his conscientiousness, markedly prefers the roseate to the sombre.*

Carol D. Wright also speaks of the cause for the fall in the working class's share. He sees it in the development of machine production, or, as Marx would have said, in the change in the organic composition of capital.**

What has our "critic" to say on this matter? Does he think that the United States of America has not yet emerged from the initial stage of capitalism?

Mr. P. Struve cites from Carol D. Wright's book, so he should have a knowledge of it. However, he seems to have failed to

* See his *Industrial Evolution of the United States*, New York, 1895, p. 192. Atkinson's having arrived at different conclusions in his calculations is simply due to his *having taken the fall in the rate of profits for a lesser norm of surplus value*. The example he has cited shows very well how a knowledge of *economic theory* is essential to the statistician.

** *ibid.*, same page.

see what the American statistician has had to say about the lower *share* of the working class. Such near-sightedness is most awkward.²⁷¹

Between the years 1861 and 1891, *Britain's* national income rose from £ 832,000 thousand to £ 1,600,000 thousand, while wages went up from £ 388,000 thousand to £ 693,000 thousand. That means that the rate of surplus value, which stood at 114.43 per cent in 1861, rose to 130.8 per cent in 1891.*

I would like to know what Mr. P. Struve thinks of the "stage" reached by British capitalism during that period.

Or perhaps our "critic" would like to repeat the arguments with the aid of which Mr. Bowley tries to play down the impression created by the figures we have quoted, and convince the reader that the British working class's *share* of the national product has *nevertheless* not declined. Let him try to do that. We shall have no difficulty in proving to him how feeble such arguments are. However, we shall now draw his attention to the following fact.

British statisticians also include under the heading of wages *payments made to domestic servants*, which actually *come from surplus value*. Domestic servants are very numerous in Britain. According to L. Levi, they numbered 2,400,000 in 1884, while the total for agricultural workers did not exceed 900,000. In the same year, according to the same source, British domestic servants were paid a total of £ 86,000 thousand, while agricultural workers got no more than £ 67,000 thousand. If we assume that the aggregate wages paid to domestic servants in 1891 did not exceed the total for 1884, and if, after subtracting £ 86,000 thousand from the total wages received by the British working class in 1891, we add these millions to the overall sum of surplus value for the same year, then the *rate* of surplus value will rise even more. In general, the British working class hardly gets over one-third of the national income.

According to calculations made by Andreas Costa for 1899, *France's* national income was distributed as follows:

	million francs
Agricultural workers	2,000
Industrial workers	3,600
Salaried workers of various kinds	1,000
Domestic servants	1,400
Artisans, small farmers, retailers, carriers and forwarding agents, soldiers, sailors, gendarmes, petty officials, clergymen, monks and nuns, men and women teachers, etc.	4,000

* Arthur Lyon Bowley, "Changes in Average Wages in the United Kingdom Between 1860 and 1891", in *Journal of the R.S.S.*, June 1895.

	million francs
Capitalists	
1) in agriculture	from 3,500 to 4,500
2) in industry, trade and the hotel and catering business	from 3,500 to 4,500
3) rentiers, state pensioners and members of the liberal professions	from 2,500 to 3,000 *

By adding up these figures we get about 22,000,000 thousand francs, of which total *not more than one-third* went to workers, artisans and small farmers, just as was the case in Britain.

So high a degree of exploitation is possible *only given highly developed labour productivity*. It was physically impossible 30 to 35 years ago when, according to expert calculations, France's national income barely reached 15,000,000 thousand francs. That is why Mr. P. Struve is greatly in error when he links the greater exploitation of the working class to the initial stage of capitalism.

VIII

Our "critic" has misinterpreted the wage rises in many countries and many branches of industry over the last fifty years. But anyone with the least knowledge of political economy knows that *higher wages* can go hand in hand with a lower *price of labour power* and consequently also with a *greater degree of the workers' exploitation*. *Wages* are higher in Britain than on the Continent, while the *price of labour power* is higher on the Continent than it is in Britain. That is an old truth.** However, while reiterating that truth, the apologists for capitalism pass it over in modest silence when, on the basis of higher wages, they try to prove the so familiar "thesis" that the capitalists are becoming "poorer", and the workers "richer". Marx very aptly remarked in Volume One of *Capital*: "Hence we may understand the decisive importance of the transformation of value and price of labour-power into the form of *wages*, or into the value and price of labour itself. This *phenomenal form*, which makes the actual relation invisible, and indeed, shows the direct opposite of that relation, forms the basis of all the juridical notions of both labourer and capitalist, of all the mystifications of the capitalistic mode of production, of all its illusions as to liberty, of all the apologetic shifts of the vulgar economists."*** What is remarkable is that, in his capacity of "critic" of Marx, Mr. P. Struve has not only been most forgiving to the apologetic

* See V. Turquan, "Evolution de la fortune privée en France", in *Revue d'Economie politique*, février 1900.

** "But I maintain, unhesitatingly, that daily wages are no criterion of the actual cost of executing works...." (Thomas Brassey, *Work and Wages*, London, 1873, p. 66.)

*** *Capital*, Vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1872, p. 468 [Russ. ed.]²⁷³

artifices of the vulgar political economists, but has himself resorted to them. The most outstanding manifestation of his new propensity is indubitably his remark that "surplus value as embodied in the surplus product is created, not only by living labour" but is a function of all social capital.* This is the ultima Thule of bourgeois apologetics. However, most valuable pearls of this kind are also to be met in the articles which now hold our attention. It is to these that the reference belongs regarding the growth of wages as proof of a *lower level of surplus value*.

That the working day in many leading branches of industry is shorter today than it was several decades ago is true but hardly convincing. The shorter working hours were more than made up for by the greater intensity of labour. All this is again common knowledge. True, the greater intensity of labour *may*, with the *passage of time*, come up against insurmountable physiological limits but experience has shown that such a possibility has not yet become *reality*.**

Though the fact of higher wages cannot be denied, one might well ask how high they have risen, for example, in the advanced countries of the European continent? A quite unexpected reply to this question is often provided by reality.

According to *Voit*, the following amounts of nutritives are required to restore the worker's strength:

	Albumins	Fats	Carbohydrates
Given moderate work	118 gr	56 gr	500 gr
Given intense work	145 gr	100 gr	450 gr

* In an article entitled "The Fundamental Antinomy of the Theory of Labour Value", *Zhizn* [Life], February 1900. The article was courteously but ruthlessly analysed by Karelin, in an article "Notes" published in the October and November issues of *Nauchnoye Obozreniye* [Science Review].

** Labour in the United States is far more intensive than in Europe. French working men who went to the Chicago World Exhibition were amazed by the intensity of the American workers' labour (see *Rapports de la délégation ouvrière à l'exposition de Chicago*, Paris, 1894). But even in America, the natural limit to intensification has not yet been reached, though the intensity of labour is growing very rapidly. On this, see Emile Levasseur, *L'Ouvrier américain*, Paris, t. I, pp. 97 et seq. Neither has that limit been exceeded in *Australia*: "Je n'ai trouvé en Australie personne qui fût contre la journée de huit à neuf heures; chacun donnait pour expliquer cette opinion la même raison: que l'intensité du travail est plus grande avec la journée courte" (Albert Metin, *Le socialisme sans doctrines, Australie et Nouvelle Zélande*, Paris, 1901, p. 132). [I have not found anyone in Australia opposed to an eight- or nine-hour day; the explanation generally given was the same: shorter hours mean greater intensity of labour.] There the greater *intensity of labour* is a source of *unemployment* for the *weaker workers*, who cannot keep pace with the stronger (ibid., p. 146). True, a *minimum wage* had also to be established there so as to bring about such a state of affairs.

If the working man does not consume the above quantities, his organism is worn down and his labour power is undermined; what he experiences is a process of *physiological impoverishment*. Is the present-day European worker far from that impoverishment?

On the basis of data collected by Ducpétiaux, Professor Hector Denis of Brussels has found that, in 1853, the Belgian worker consumed, on the average, the following quantities of products:

Albumins	70 gr
Fats	26.2 gr
Carbohydrates	461 gr

That means that, during that period, the Belgian proletarian was far from able to restore, with the aid of food, the energy spent in the process of production. It evidently follows hence that the *price of labour power was then far lower than its value*.

During the thirty odd years that ensued, Belgian capitalism went through a brilliant "stage" of its development but the Belgian worker's strength was still being sapped by insufficient nutrition. In the eighties, his organism received the following:

Albumins	82.278 gr
Fats	77.926 gr
Carbohydrates	589.408 gr*

What tremendous progress! What an enviable fate for the working class! The worker was now getting the handsome quantity of *twelve* extra grams of albumins, to say nothing of additional fats and especially carbohydrates. After that, how can one fail to speak of the blunting of social contradictions? If the improvement in the Belgian workers' condition continues apace in this fashion, then, in the forthcoming geological period, they may be getting *almost* as much as is required for the correct feeding of the organism.

If we take matters seriously, we have no right to speak with confidence of any improvement, even the *most infinitesimal*, in the Belgian worker's nutrition. Here everything depends on the relation between his present daily expenditure of labour power and what it was in the fifties. If that expenditure *has grown*, then his nutrition has become perhaps *even less satisfactory*, despite a certain addition of nutritives. Consequently, even the extra 12 grams of albumins cannot keep us from drawing pessimistic inferences regarding the social consequences of capitalist progress.

* Hector Denis, *La Dépression économique et sociale*, Bruxelles, 1895, p. 145.

All that we know is that the Belgian worker is still economically unable to restore his labour power through nutrition. Here is what has been said on the matter by one who can hardly be suspected of the obstinate "dogmatism" of the orthodox Marxists, namely, the Governor of Western Flanders.

"It is known ... that the minimum ration for the soldier is 1,066 grams of bread, 285 grams of meat and 200 grams of vegetables. Now our workers, who toil from morning till night, need a still greater amount of food. However, what they consume does not even approach the soldier's minimum."*

The Belgian proletarian's labour power is still being sold below its value, while his wages have undoubtedly risen quite "considerably" during the last half-century. We know that the lower the level of wages, the more impressive any rise in them seems. If the worker gets one penny a day, then a rise amounting to a farthing may be imposingly called an *accretion of 20 per cent!* However, it goes without saying that this "considerable" rise in no way removes the social and physiological poverty of the working man.

Mr. P. Struve is most scornful of the iron law of wages,²⁷³ of "blessed memory". It is of course quite impossible to defend that law today; its bankruptcy was too clearly revealed by Marx. But one cannot but also agree that the law might seem *golden* to many a Belgian worker, even in the wording given it by Lassalle and Rodbertus.

IX

The trolls proposed to Ibsen's Peer Gynt that they would knock his left eye a little out of shape. "True, you'll have a slight squint after that," their chieftain added soothingly, "but then everything that presents itself to your eye will seem beautiful and gratifying." Our critic has undergone a similar operation at the hands of the *Brentano school*, which cherishes the Carey-Bastiat tradition like the apple of their eye. We do not know exactly which eye of his has been knocked a little out of shape by that estimable school but, to say the least, it has been done in such a way that the capitalist order now seems to him, if not most beautiful and gratifying, then at least incomparably more attractive than it would were his vision unimpaired. One of the many possible proofs of this is provided by his arguments of the capitalist exploitation of women and children.

In a polemic with Bernstein, Kautsky expressed the idea that the growing number of working women and children testified to the impoverishment of the working class. This idea seems to have

* Cited from Hector Denis, op. cit., p. 144. The reference is to the eighties.

been most displeasing to Mr. P. Struve. "When I was reading Kautsky," he remarks caustically, "it seemed to me that I was listening to a speech by the esteemed Decurtins at the Zurich Congress...."²⁷⁴ "If I shared Kautsky's view on women's labour, I would also accept the practical proposals on that labour advanced by the Catholic social-politicians."* Excellent. But how does Mr. P. Struve himself look upon the matter? You will now learn.

He acknowledges that the use of women's and children's labour in Germany rose considerably during the years 1882-95, but goes on to say that such an increase was especially to be seen in the field of trade, and in general in such branches of the economy in which members of proprietors' own families often work. Hence, he has drawn the comforting conclusion that Kautsky's opinion on this kind of labour should be taken *cum grano salis*. "The course of development in general is not as uniform, and its meaning not the same to such a degree," he says, "as is shown in the scheme of the theory of impoverishment."** He continues with a most comforting reference to the United States of America, where the utilisation of women's labour decreased *relatively*, and children's labour also *absolutely*, in the period between 1840 and 1890.

It follows that capitalism is that very spear which heals the wounds it inflicts: in the "initial stage", it was indeed somewhat playful, sparing neither grown-up men, women, nor children, in its striving to bring under its rule everything living and capable of producing surplus value. But that was only a passing fancy and error of youth. On reaching the age of maturity, capitalism grows milder and gradually slackens the tight reins; then the degree of its exploitation of the proletariat falls, and the women and children it has driven so hard are at last able to enjoy leisure at their own homes, in conditions which in their turn are improving, not only absolutely but also relatively, i.e., in comparison with the home conditions of the capitalists. All this is so gratifying, admirable, comforting and inevitable that we are unable to understand why Mr. P. Struve has come out against the "*monotony*". Of course, monotony produces a grievous impression when we come up against it in the "*scheme of the theory of impoverishment*", but in the *scheme of the enrichment of the workers and the impoverishment of the capitalist* it is quite pleasant and even in no way fatiguing, to prove which we shall make reference to Mr. P. Struve himself: all his present economic arguments are very flat and monotonous, but one has to be a gloomy "epigone" of Marx to fail to be moved by their ennobling influence.

* *Archiv*, S. 732-33.

** *ibid.*, S. 734.

The only trouble is that stark reality has so sharply contradicted these ennobling arguments. Let us consider, at least, the exploitation of women and children by capital. Mr. P. Struve has forgotten that the number of women engaged in *industrial work*—the number of women *wage-earners*—went up by 82 per cent in Germany between the years 1883 and 1895, the corresponding increase of male workers being only 39 per cent. If we are not deceived by our one-sided “epigonism”, then such figures are indicative of *both an absolute and a relative* increase in the number of women exploited by capital. But what is it that drives women under the heavy yoke of capital? Of course, it is not the alleged “*enrichment*” of the proletariat.

True, Carroll D. Wright has said that the number of women engaged in factory work in the United States was *relatively* greater in 1850 than it was in 1890, but he himself goes on to remark that *exact* figures on women's labour have existed only since 1870.* But what do we see, beginning with that year? We see a *constant increase—both absolute and relative—in the extent of women's labour*. In his Eleventh Annual Report, the selfsame Carroll D. Wright cited figures from which it follows, in his own words, that “the proportion of females 10 years of age or over employed in all occupations in the United States *rose*”... (italics ours—G.P.) “from 14.68 per cent” (of the overall figure of the female population—G.P.) “in 1870, to 17.22 per cent in 1890, while the males *decreased* in proportion” (italics again ours—G.P.) “from 85.32 per cent in 1870 to 82.78 per cent in 1890, fully corroborating the facts obtained in the present investigation” (i.e., in the Eleventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labour—G.P.) “that the females are to some extent entering into places at the *expense of the males*.”**

In 1870, women comprised 14.14 per cent of the work force in the manufacturing and mechanical industries;*** in 1890 the percentage went up to 20.18.****

“The fact is absolutely demonstrated, therefore, that the proportion of females...” (working for wages—G.P.) “is gradually increasing.”*****

Mr. P. Struve will come up against the same conclusion in the well-known book by Sartorius, *Die nordamerikanischen Gewerkschaften unter dem Einfluss der fortschreitenden Productionstechnik*, Berlin, 1886. On page 109, we find the following table showing

* *Industrial Evolution*, p. 204.

** *Eleventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, Washington, 1897, p. 21.

*** [These last four words are in English in the original.]

**** *ibid.*, p. 22.

***** *ibid.*

the *relative* and absolute growth of female labour in a number of States in the country:

	Women workers at factories		Population	
	1850	1880	1850	1880
Pennsylvania	22,078	73,046	2,311,786	4,282,891
New Jersey	8,762	27,099	489,555	1,131,116
Illinois	493	15,233	815,470	3,077,871
New York	51,612	137,455	3,097,394	5,082,871
Ohio	4,437	18,563	1,980,329	3,198,062
New Hampshire	14,103	29,356	317,976	346,991

These figures show whose words should be taken *cum grano salis*—Kautsky's or Mr. P. Struve's.

And what about *child* labour?

In the period between 1870 and 1880, the number of working children between 10 and 15 *rose* in the United States from 13.9 per cent of all children in this age bracket, to 16.82 per cent. On the contrary, the number *fell* to 10.34 per cent in the years between 1880 and 1890. This was the outcome of factory legislation, which restricted the use of child labour. The number of children employed in industry fell, in the main, in the New England states, where the operation of the law was particularly efficacious. Where it was less efficacious, child labour *assumed even more extensive proportion than in the previous decade*.*

The self-justifying dodges resorted to by the "critics" of Marx are no more capable of concealing the truth from the careful researcher than are the apologetic exercises of the vulgar economists. Anyone with eyes to see will realise that the development of capitalism leads to those very results that Marx spoke of: not content with the exploitation of adult male workers, *capital is striving more and more to subordinate women and children to itself*. The growing subordination of women and children to it undoubtedly means a deterioration in the working class's social position.

But Mr. Struve will tell us that the growth in the number of children employed at factories was checked by factory legislation, at least in some States.**

It did, we shall reply, but that in no way denies or even *modifies* the overall meaning of the Marxist theory of social development. That factory legislation can protect some of the interests of the working class was admitted already in the *Manifesto of the*

* Levasseur, *L'Ouvrier américain*, I, 198.

** Cf. his remark on the possible influence of "social reform" on female labour (*Archiv*, S. 733).

*Communist Party.** However, the question is not whether factory legislation has or has not protected *some* of the workers' interests; it is a question of what is the *algebraical sum* of those consequences of factory legislation that are advantageous to the proletariat and present a *positive* magnitude, and of the trend towards a worsening in the working class's social condition, a trend inherent in capitalism and presenting a *negative* magnitude. According to Marx, that algebraical sum *cannot be a positive magnitude*, i. e., the worker's social condition grows worse *despite* the advantages he gets from factory legislation. It is this—and only this—that is still being insisted on by Marx's "orthodox" followers. His so-called critics say the *reverse*. They are out to prove that the notorious "social reform" *has already improved* the worker's social condition, and will improve it even more with the passage of time, so that in due course, probably in the next geological period, the *capitalist mode of production* will imperceptibly develop *into the socialist*. Who is right? Everything we have till now learnt, and all the facts and phenomena we have dealt with emphatically testify in favour of Marx and the "orthodox": in *economic* terms the distance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has *grown*; the working class has become *relatively* poorer because its *share* of the national product has decreased relatively. However important factory legislation and other palliatives of "social reform" are, to the working class, they have far from outweighed developing capitalism's tendencies to disparage the working class. The proletariat has been in the position of a man swimming against a powerful current: were he to yield to the force of the current without offering it any resistance, he would be carried *very* far back; however, he offered resistance and has tried to make headway, which is why the current cannot carry him *as far back* as it *might*; *nevertheless, the man is carried back* because *the current is far stronger than his efforts are*.**

* "It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried" (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 117, Chapter 1, "Bourgeoisie and Proletarians").²⁷⁵

** On the basis of a careful study of figures referring to the city of York, Rowntree has arrived at the following conclusions: 1) ten per cent of the population of the city get under 21s. 8d. per week and therefore live in conditions of what he calls "primary poverty"; 2) 17.93 per cent of the population live in conditions of "secondary poverty", i.e., though having earnings of over 21s. 8d. a week, they incur various extra—productive or non-productive—expenditures (*Poverty. A Study of Town Life*, second edition, p. 298). In Rowntree's opinion, between 25 and 30 per cent of the aggregate urban population live in poverty (*ibid.*, p. 30). There's "automatic socialism" for you! Such poverty, Rowntree goes on to say, has been prevalent, despite the growth of the national wealth, even during "unprecedented prosperity" (*ibid.*, p. 304). Indeed, Goschen was right, "Figures do not lie."

X

We have till now been dealing with the *relative deterioration* in the workers' condition. However, we have not forgotten that certain "critics", these including Mr. P. Struve, have attempted to prove that Marx wrote, not of a relative but of an *absolute* deterioration of that condition. If one is to believe these gentlemen, all talk by the "orthodox" regarding a relative deterioration presents nothing but the sophistries of unbridled wranglers, who feel they have lost their case in debate but are loth to admit it. But what are the facts of the case?

In a booklet entitled *Wage Labour and Capital*, which, it will be recalled, was based on lectures he delivered in the Brussels German Society in 1847, Marx showed that even in the instance—most favourable to the workers—when the rapid growth of capital, by increasing the demand for labour power, leads to higher wages, the condition of the workers *becomes relatively worse*. "The rapid growth of productive capital brings about an equally rapid growth of wealth, luxury, social wants, social enjoyments. Thus, although the enjoyments of the worker have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyments of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the state of development of society in general. Our desires and pleasures spring from society; we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature."^{*}

What is this but the theory of the *relative* deterioration in the condition of the working class?

Further: "...If the income of the worker increases with the rapid growth of capital, the social gulf that separates the worker from the capitalist increases at the same time, and the power of capital over labour, the dependence of labour on capital, likewise increases at the same time.

"To say that the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital is only to say that the more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him, the greater is the number of workers that can be employed and called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent on capital be increased.... If capital is growing rapidly, wages may rise; the profit of capital rises incomparably more rapidly. The material position of the worker has improved, but

^{*} *Wage Labour and Capital*, Geneva, 1894, pp. 33-34. [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation published in Geneva.]²⁷⁶

at the cost of his social position. The social gulf that divides him from the capitalist has widened."*

That Marx did not at all eschew the idea of the *relative* deterioration in the condition of the working class, as the "critics" would assure us, is proved beyond doubt by these excerpts. They also go to show that Marx would not have ceased from speaking of the *impoverishment* of the working class even if an *absolute* improvement might have been observed in its condition. However, it is true that, in his analysis of the *actual* development of capitalist society as given in the booklet, Marx found that the growth of capital was far from always linked with an absolute improvement in the condition of the working class. "*The more productive capital grows, the more the division of labour and the application of machinery expands,*" he says, "*the more competition among the workers grows and the more their wages contract.*"** He went on to point out that the development of capitalism drove into the ranks of wage-earners ever new sections of the population, and ended the booklet with the following overall conclusion:

"*If capital grows rapidly, competition among the workers grows incomparably more rapidly, that is, the means of employment, the means of subsistence, of the working class decrease proportionately so much the more, and, nevertheless, the rapid growth of capital is the most favourable condition for wage labour.*"***

Marx evidently thought at the time that the relative decrease in the sources of earnings should inevitably lead to lower wages, which is why he held that the development of capitalism led to a fall in wages. This was a view he held in common with many socialists of the time.****

In the booklet we have mentioned, Marx's economic views, however, did not yet appear in a finalised form.***** In it, he did not yet distinguish between profit and surplus value, wages and the price of labour power. That is why we shall address ourselves to his main work—*Capital*.

In Volume One of *Capital*, Marx says that, as a result of higher labour productivity, the price of labour power may *fall*, despite the simultaneous *increase* in the means of subsistence at the disposal of the labourer.***** Consequently, a distinction is here drawn between the *relative* and the *absolute* worsening in the labourer's condition. Elsewhere in the same volume, Marx, in mentioning Gladstone's opinion that the "intoxicating" growth of

* *Wage Labour and Capital*, p. 39.²⁷⁷

** *ibid.*, p. 47, italicised in the original.²⁷⁸

*** *ibid.*, p. 48.²⁷⁹

**** Cf., for example, Louis Blanc, *Organisation du travail*, 15^e éd., p. 40.

***** Cf. Engels's remark in the Introduction to the booklet.

***** *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 454 [Russ. ed.]²⁸⁰

Britain's social wealth had made the poor less poor, noted the following: "If the working-class has remained 'poor', only 'less poor' in proportion as it produces for the wealthy class 'an intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power', then it has remained relatively just as poor. If the extremes of poverty have not lessened, they have increased, because the extremes of wealth have."*

What is this but the theory of the *relative* impoverishment of the working class?

True, Marx also indicates in *Capital* the causes that tend to bring about a fall in wages. But, while establishing the highly important distinction between the pay received by the labourer, and the price of his labour power, he no longer affirms that a higher degree of the workers' exploitation must inevitably lead to a fall in his wages. No, in the direct and clear meaning of his finalised theory, a fall in the price of labour power, and a relative worsening in the workers' condition may be accompanied by a rise in his pay.** That is why one cannot but be surprised by the dexterity of those who are out to refute Marx by pointing out that wages went up in the second half of the nineteenth century. That dexterity deserves the greater praise for that remark—inasmuch as it is true—referring, in particular, to so-called skilled workers, whereas in *Capital* Marx cited examples mostly from the life of unskilled workers.***

XI

Mr. P. Struve dislikes the passage in *Capital*, in which Marx says that the higher the productivity of labour, the more the workers' are riveted to the means of the occupation, and the less satisfactory the conditions of their existence. The reader will remember the following celebrated passage:

"The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus-population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, there-

* *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 562. [Russ. ed.]²⁸¹

** *ibid.*, p. 556. Cf. the quotations made by Mr. P. Struve in his "Randglossen" in *Neue Zeit*, IX. Jahrgang, S. 571.

*** Thus, in discussing British workers' housing and food he made the following reservation: "The limits of this book compel us to concern ourselves chiefly with the worst paid part of the industrial proletariat, and with the agricultural labourers, who together form the majority of the working-class" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 563. [Russ. ed.]²⁸²)

fore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that *produces its own product in the form of capital*.”*

Mr. P. Struve thinks that these lines are not in keeping with the actual state of affairs in society today, and that, were they in keeping with it, the “development towards socialism” would be quite impossible.

Let us examine this opinion of our “critic’s”.

Is it true or untrue that the labourers’ conditions of existence become more and more insecure with the development of labour productivity?

People who have made a careful study of this question and, to the best of our knowledge, have not yet been suspected of “dogmatism” say that it is true.

Indeed, let us recall the opinion of the British Commission that studied the depression in industry. The *majority* of the Commission were of the opinion that the civilised nations can at present turn out far more manufactures than are needed on the world market.** The discrepancy between productive force and consumer capacity leads to depression in industry and to lower profits. We leave it to the reader to judge *how* the workers’ conditions of existence must be affected by such a state of affairs brought about by the highly developed state of society’s productive forces.

The *minority* came out still more decisively and definitely. In their opinion, a very big change had taken place in the preceding forty years (the Report was published in 1886) in the life of civilised nations. Labour productivity there had reached such a high level of development that the main difficulty now lay, not in the expensiveness or the rarity of products but in finding employment, in the absence of which the vast majority of the population were deprived of all means of subsistence.***

Again, let the reader judge for himself whether all this contradicts or confirms the above-quoted words of Marx.

The Commission left no room for doubt as to the nature of the difficulty created by the development of labour productivity. As they put it, it consisted in the fewer sources of wages for the working class, i.e., in the creation of *relative over-population*. *That was exactly what Marx said*.

Thus, with the development of capitalism, the terms of the sale of labour power have *changed to the disadvantage of the sellers*,

* *Capital*, Vol. 1 p. 556.²⁸³

** See p. XVII in the *Final Report of the Commission*, which we have so often quoted from.

*** *ibid.*, p. LIV.

which is sufficient explanation of the fall we have demonstrated in the working class's *share* of the national income. But, in saying that, we in no way deny higher wages in certain branches of production, but merely remark that such a rise goes hand in hand with a fall in the price of labour power, and, besides, it is not as considerable as the apologists of capitalism would have us believe.

Giffen asserted that the wage level rose by 100 or even more *per cent** in some branches of British industry between the years 1833 and 1883. This is a staggering exaggeration, which has long been pointed out in various quarters. Any comparison between the figures for 1833 and the eighties will reveal very little, for the simple reason that in 1833, i.e., *prior to the reform of the Poor Laws*²⁶⁴ many workers with families were on parish relief, which no doubt led to an artificial lowering of the wage level.** Besides, even this scientifically impermissible comparison does not always confirm the roseate conclusion drawn by the "prime British statistician". Thus, for instance, an able seaman's pay reached 60 shillings a month in 1833; *in the eighties, it stood at the same level*. In 1833 London compositors were earning an average of 36 shillings a week; in the eighties, *their wages were no higher**** That, however, was not the main thing; the main thing was that this wage rise in Britain was accompanied by a series of phenomena that considerably detracted from its favourable consequences for the workers. Throughout the period under review, urban development made great forward strides, as a result of which the worker's essential expenditures grew considerably, rents became higher**** and the workers were obliged to travel to work by train or tram, while previously they had been able to walk to their

* "The Progress of the Working Classes in the Last Half-Century", a speech delivered to the Royal Statistical Society and published in *Essays in Finance*, second series, London, 1886; cf. his "Further Notes on the Progress of the Working Classes", etc. in the *Journal of Royal Statistical Society*, March 1886. The "Notes" were also published in *Essays in Finance*.

** Cf. the relevant remark by Benjamin Jones in "Discussion on Mr. Giffen's Paper", *Journal*, etc., March 1886, p. 96. It is self-evident that the greater the artificial reduction in the level of wages prior to the Law of 1834, the more immense the impression from the *seemingly* improved material condition of the worker after the promulgation of the Law, when wages became the sole means of subsistence for the toiling masses.

*** The remark by the selfsame Benjamin Jones, on the same page. Numerous highly forcible objections to Giffen were also made at the Industrial Remuneration Conference, at which Lloyd Jones revealed the poetical licence practised by certain other British statisticians. See the Report of that conference, p. 35.

**** According to Chadwick, rents *doubled* in London (*Journal of the R.S.S.*, March 1886, the "Discussion on Mr. Giffen's Paper", p. 97). Miss Edith Simcox finds that higher rents swallow up to three-fifths of the increase in workers' wages due to higher pay levels. (*Industrial Remuneration Conference Report*, p. 92).

places of employment, etc. Besides, adventitious loss of working hours became more frequent than before. Mr. Gay, a secretary of the foundrymen's union, calculated from the records at his disposal that members were losing up to 20 per cent of their working time through no fault of their own.* This figure is indicative of the size of the reserve army of workers, whose existence our "critic" is prone to *deny*.** Hobson thinks that "the general condition of employment in England is one of greater irregularity and that the waste of time and energy is larger than it was half a century ago or during the eighteenth century."*** This of course has escaped the attention of "scholars" who prattle about "automatic socialism" in capitalist society.

How *frivolous* the most "*estimable*" representatives of the bourgeoisie become when they begin to speak about the "enrichment" of the workers is to be seen from the example of the selfsame Goschen. To back his argument in favour of the "automatic socialism" he has invented, Goschen refers to the fact that, in the period between 1875 and 1886, the number of houses producing *less than* £ 10 of rent grew far more slowly than the number of houses with rents of between £ 10 and £ 20. He attributed this to a considerable part of the working class having grown more prosperous and therefore presenting demands for more expensive housing. However, he himself has foreseen that objectors will point to the *higher rents*, a fact of common knowledge.

To this unavoidable objection he makes reply in advance: "At least, the working men ... can afford to pay them..."**** [i.e., higher rents]. There is no outarguing such "objective" researchers!

The "well-intentioned" economists are no less aware than we are that higher wages do not of themselves equate to an improvement in the workers' conditions. However, they often pass the fact over in silence, probably in the interests of the "*social peace*". In other and less delicate cases, they speak out frankly. As an

* *ibid.*, p. 30.

** Of course, this proneness is not inherent in him alone. Here is the consolatory remark Levasseur has to make: "En temps ordinaire, on peut dire vaguement qu'il se trouve sans ouvrage moins du dixième des ouvriers de l'industrie et probablement moins du vingtième des salariés (femmes et enfants compris)" (*L'Ouvrier américain*, t. I, p. 584.). [One might say that in ordinary times under one-tenth of all industrial workers are unemployed, and probably under one-twentieth of all hired workers in general (including women and children)]. That is not so little, Mr. Professor! "*Moins du dixième*" is a tremendous and *irreplaceable* loss brought about by the contradiction in society's property relations and the state of its productive forces.

*** [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian book entitled *Problems of Poverty and Unemployment* St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 239 in which John A. Hobson's works, *Problems of Poverty* and *The Problem of the Unemployed*, translated into Russian, were included.]

**** *Journal of the R.S.S.*, Dec., 1888, p. 602.

example, we can refer to the renowned *Levasseur*, who, in his book *La Population de la France*, points out very reasonably: "When they leave their villages, workers allow themselves to be tempted by the prospect of higher pay; they lose sight of the unemployment, the high prices of dwellings and food, and the temptation to spend more; many of them have changed their condition without improving their lot."* Elsewhere in the same book, the esteemed scholar, who has confessed, incidentally, to a weakness for "Bastiat's philosophical views on social harmony"**, loses sight of these reasonable considerations and, on the basis of a rise in wage levels, speaks of the all-round improvement in the workers' conditions of life.***

If the reader does not wish to follow the example of such "objective" scholars but will *always* take account of *all* aspects of the workers' conditions of life, he will agree with us that, even in Great Britain, the improvement in the material condition of the proletariat has been quite insignificant. The usual reference is to the decline in *pauperism* in that country as outstanding proof of "*progress of the working classes*". But Marx in his time remarked that "the official statistics become more and more misleading as to the actual extent of pauperism in proportion as, with the accumulation of capital, the class struggle, and, therefore, the class-consciousness of the working-men, develop".**** To this it should be added that the fall in the number of poor people on public relief was also brought about by a series of laws which *more and more* hampered *home aid* to all poor people in general, and especially to *adult workers* with at least some earnings. As a result of such laws, which were administered with remorseless callousness, the number of poor people in receipt of such aid fell in England and Wales from 955,146 (5.5 per cent of the population) in 1849 to 600,505 (1.95 per cent of the population) in 1897. During the same period, however, the number of workhouse inmates *rose* from 133,513 to 214,382. True, the share of the poor of that category in respect of the entire population remained practically unchanged: 0.77 in the first case, and 0.70 in the second.***** But it is this very constancy in the relative number of workhouse inmates that should prompt the thought that the bruited decrease in British pauperism

* *La Population française*, t. II, p. 413. Cf. also Henri Joly, *La France criminelle*, Paris, 1889, p. 350.

** *L'Ouvrier américain*, t. I., p. 593.

*** *La Population française*, t. III, p. 86 et suiv. Cf. also *L'Ouvrier américain*, t. II, p. 215 et suiv.

**** *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 563-64.²⁸³

***** P. F. Aschrott, *Das englische Armenwesen*, Leipzig, 1886. S. 422. Cf. his *Die Entwicklung des Armenwesens in England seit dem Jahre 1885*, Leipzig, 1886, S. 64.

is a fiction that can deceive only those who would be deceived, and have eyes but not to see with. Miss Edith Simcox is quite right in saying that the statistics of British pauperism are far from a true measure of poverty in that country. "More than 10 per cent of those who die in a year," she says, "die in workhouses or" (charity-maintained—G.P.) "hospitals, and this mortality represents a population of two and a half millions; so that nearly three and a half million of the population are either actual paupers, or in such poverty as to have been driven across the borders of pauperism by illness."*

XII

This is a very gloomy picture but even so gloomy a picture cannot fully convey the sombre nature of reality. From other sources we learn that pauper mortality is much higher than Miss E. Simcox thought. *One-sixth* of the population of London, the world's richest city, die at workhouses or hospitals attached to them. But that is not all. There are grounds to believe that between 20 and 25 per cent of the British population die in conditions so close to beggary that funeral expenses have to be borne by the parish.** About 20 per cent of all those who reach the age of sixty-five in England and Wales have to apply for public charity, according to figures provided by Charles Booth, the well-known researcher.*** Since there are, of course, classes in the English population in which few aged people fall into poverty, if they ever do, it follows that the working class accounts for an even higher relative number of the aged poor. *Between 40 and 45 per cent of all proletarians fall into extreme poverty in their old age* in London and the Home Counties.****

This is terrible in the literal sense of the word! And with the existence of such horrible things, apologists for the bourgeoisie speak of the diffusion of wealth, the blunting of social contradictions, and the like. Truly, it may be said that their *cynicism* reaches the *sublime*! One cannot but be amazed at the "critics" of Marxism being unable to be *critical* of such cynicism and yielding ever more to the influence of the apologists!

Anyone familiar with the condition of the English working class will not be surprised to learn that the *percentage of suicides*

* *Industrial Remuneration Conference Report*, p. 89.

** *Fifth and Final Report of the Royal Commission of Labour*, Part I, London, 1894, Report by W. Abraham, M. Austin, I. Mawdsley and T. Mann, p. 128.

*** *Pauperism*, 1892, p. 54; *The Aged Poor in England and Wales*, London, 1894, p. 38.

**** *Charles Booth*, p. 39. But, again, that is not all. There are rural areas in which every aged worker dies in penury.

in England is particularly high among elderly people of 55 or over.* After a lifetime of back-breaking toil reflecting a labour intensity only the Anglo-Saxon worker is capable of, aged proletarians voluntarily leave this earthly paradise for the celestial. And the more educated the English worker becomes, the more frequently he resorts to suicide as the best means of escaping from poverty. In counties up to 27 per cent of whose inhabitants cannot even sign their names, the number of suicides reaches 57.5 per million; in counties where between 17 and 25 per cent of the population cannot sign their names, the number of suicides rises to 69.2 per million inhabitants. Finally, the highest number of suicides, 80.3 per million inhabitants, refers to areas where the percentage of illiteracy does not exceed 17.** The reason is obvious: the more educated a man is, the harder he finds it to put up with the humiliation inflicted by poverty, and in general with the hardships of life. Or perhaps another explanation is more in place here? Perhaps it may be supposed that the number of persons who cannot sign their names declines—as we have seen in Russia—together with the growth of *industrial development*, so that the mounting number of suicides is thus the beneficent outcome of the growth in “*social*” *wealth*? In both cases, we arrive at a conclusion that is quite unflattering to capitalist society and to all those gentlemen who raise their voices in a chorus of comfort about the *blunting* of social *contradictions*.

Despite the ruthless ferocity with which the British bourgeoisie practise their “charity”, the number of the poor people on relief in rich London is outpacing the population growth.*** How, after such things, can Marx and Engels be accused of exaggeration when they say in the *Communist Manifesto*: “*The modern labourer... becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth.*”²⁸⁶

If such is the state of affairs in Great Britain, which, as a result of her long years of supremacy on the world market, has yet been able to at least somewhat improve the condition of some sections of its proletariat, what must the position be in other lands which do not enjoy the advantages of industrial monopoly? Some idea of that can be provided by the fact, quoted above, that the *Belgian* worker is obliged to sell his labour below its value. We shall cite several facts characterising the condition of the *French* *proletarian*.

In the period between 1833 and 1843, the price of white bread in France was $34\frac{1}{2}$ centimes a kilogram. In 1894, a kilogram of

* Cf. Ogle, “On Suicides in England and Wales”, *Journal of the R.S.S.*, March 1886.

** Ogle, op. cit., p. 112.

*** Hobson, op. cit., p. 21.

bread cost between $37 \frac{1}{2}$ and 40 centimes in Paris.* In 1831-40, the wholesale price of a kilogram of beef was 1 franc 5 centimes, and that of a kilogram of pork 78 centimes; in 1894, the price of beef was 1 franc 64 centimes a kilogram, with pork costing 1 franc 54 centimes.** In 1854, the price of a thousand eggs was 52 francs; today they cost 82 francs.*** In 1849 a hectolitre of potatoes (low-grade) cost between $3 \frac{1}{2}$ and $4 \frac{1}{2}$ francs; today's price is between 7 and $12 \frac{1}{2}$ francs. A kilogram of butter cost between 1 franc 28 centimes and 1 franc 90 centimes in 1849; today's price bracket is between 2 francs 5 centimes and 4 francs 26 centimes. Finally, the price of beans doubled between 1849 and 1892.****

Again according to Pelloutier, the price of foodstuffs has risen in France by between 22 and 23 per cent during the last 30 years, while average wages have not increased by more than 17 per cent.***** If you add to this the soaring rents in the big cities, you cannot but arrive at the conclusion that the French proletarian's material condition *has deteriorated not only relatively but absolutely* during the three decades. The conclusion is fully corroborated by the statistics, which show that the French worker gets less nourishment than he did 50 years ago.*

The absolute deterioration in the French proletariat's economic condition naturally brings *greater pauperism* in its train: "*The modern labourer ... becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth.*" In the five years between 1886 and 1891, the population of the French capital increased by 4.01 per cent; during the same period, the number of paupers in this ville lumière rose by 23.1 per cent. The five-year period was no exceptional one: the following table shows that the growth of pauperism has long assumed shocking proportions in Paris:

Years	Expenditures on Paris paupers	Population
1850	5,000,000	1,532,622
1870	10,000,000	
1892	18,000,000	2,386,232**
1895	20,000,000	

* Fernand Pelloutier, *La vie ouvrière en France*, Paris, 1900, p. 183.

** *ibid.*, p. 186.

*** *ibid.*, p. 189.

**** *ibid.*, p. 191.

***** *ibid.*, p. 194.

* Cf. Pelloutier, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 190, 194.

** *ibid.*, p. 289.

Do not think that all this refers to Paris alone. The situation is much the same all over France. In 1873, there were 6,715 "charity bureaux" in France, rendering relief to 806,000 poor people; in 1860, 11,351 bureaux supported 1,115,900 persons; in 1888, such bureaux numbered 15,138, the number of the poor maintained by them standing at 1,647,000.* In 28 years (1860-88), the number of paupers went up by 42 per cent, with the population increase being only 5.4 per cent. "*The modern labourer ... becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth....*"

XIII

Bourgeois economists, who raise their heads in pride at the sight of decrease in the official number of paupers in Britain, modestly lower their eyes in the face of the statistics on French pauperism, and very conveniently recall, at the same time, that the figures of official pauperism, taken by themselves, do not prove anything. We, too, think that, taken separately, these figures cannot serve as an infallible indicator of the proletariat's economic condition. We therefore consider it necessary to *verify* the testimony of such figures with the aid of statistics of another kind.

In the half-century between 1838 and 1888, *crime* increased in France as follows:

Number of convictions for	An increase of
crimes of violence	51 per cent
offences against property . .	69 " "
offences against public morals	240 " "
vagrancy and begging	430 **

The amazing increase in the number of convictions for begging and vagrancy emphatically confirms the official testimony of the statistics on pauperism in France, regarding which we may have

* Leroy-Beaulieu, *Traité théorique et pratique d'économie politique*, Paris, 1896, t. IV, p. 468.

** H. Joly, *La France criminelle*, p. 20. Another source gives the growth in the number of convictions for begging and vagrancy as follows: 16 per 100,000 inhabitants of France in 1838; in 1887, the number of convictions stood at 85 (see the interesting Report "Criminalité et vagabondage", presented by Cavalieri to the Geneva Congress of Criminalists and published in its *compte rendu*).

harboured some doubt. Consequently, we have to acknowledge the truth of the statistics.

Let the objection not be raised that France is a country on the decline; she is still one of the wealthiest countries in Europe. It is not only in France that a rapid growth of pauperism is to be seen. Here is a table which shows the growth in the number of people on relief in Brussels and its important adjacent urban communities, between the years 1875 and 1895.*

Commune	One person on relief per	
	1875	1894
Bruxelles	9	4
Schaerbeek	16	12
Molenbeek	11	10
Laeken	16	25
Anderlecht	35	8
Saint-Josse	24	15
Saint-Gilles	25	20
Ixelles	20	17

With the exception of Laeken, we can see an extremely rapid growth of pauperism in all the communities. In Anderlecht, there was one person on charity per 35 inhabitants in 1875; in 1894, there was one person on relief per 8 inhabitants. Brussels had gone still further; a quarter of the population were reduced to beggary. In the provinces—in Bruges, Ypres, Enghien, Nivelles and Tournai, things were no better, but *even worse* in places: in some of these towns there was one pauper on relief *per two or three inhabitants*.** Thus we see that in Belgium too the “labourer ... becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth”.

The author we have taken these figures from hastens to make a reservation already made several times in this article: the number of the poor on relief does not show the actual extent of poverty.*** That is, of course, something nobody will dispute, but it is indubitable that the extraordinary rapid growth of this number does not show any improvement in the condition of the working class: what worker will appeal for alms unless poverty has overcome his sense of human dignity and pride of class?

* See *L'organisation de la bienfaisance publique*, par Louis Bertrand, Bruxelles, 1900, p. 16.

** *ibid.*, p. 17.

*** *ibid.*, p. 16.

In Germany, where the extent of official pauperism is far lower than in Belgium, we meet with the following interesting phenomenon: in towns with under 20 thousand inhabitants, the percentage of paupers on relief is 4.75; in cities of between 55,000 and 100,000 it rises to 6.39; finally, where the population is over 100,000, it already stands at 6.51 of the total population.*

Here again we see that poverty develops more rapidly than population, if not more rapidly than wealth. What has Mr. P. Struve to say to this?

Perhaps he will say that the number of poor people on charity in Germany has fallen considerably in recent years. That will be true. But why has the number fallen? Simply because there has been a *change in the system of administering relief*. It is a long way from that change to an *improvement* in the condition of the workers.

We shall also ask our "critic" to note that *crime* is growing, not only in France but also in all the capitalist countries which have been studied in this respect.** In 1882, there were 1,043 convictions per 100,000 inhabitants of Germany over 12 years old and not serving in the armed forces; in 1895, the number was already 1,251.*** What brought about this growth of crime? The French socialists (e.g., Louis Blanc in his *Organisation du travail*) have long linked it with the *growing difficulties in the struggle for existence, and in particular with the impoverishment of the working class*. Experience has fully confirmed this indication. Professor Liszt, whom we have just quoted, says that the dependence of crime on the economic condition is common knowledge and is questioned by none.**** He goes on to remark that by the economic condition one should understand, first and foremost, the *general condition of the working class* (die Gesamtlage der arbeitenden Klassen) i.e., in all respects, not only in the "financial". We already know that higher wages—something that bourgeois economists keep harping on—do not yet bring about an overall improvement in the proletarian's conditions of life. Crime, which is growing far more rapidly than population, is a reminder of this indisputable truth. Indeed, note that *juvenile delinquency is growing far more rapidly than adult crime*. Between 1826 and 1880, the overall figure for criminal offences committed by adults in France *trebled*, while the number of cases of juvenile delinquency *quadrupled******. Juvenile delinquency grew even more rapidly after 1880. At present,

* Leroy-Beaulieu, op. cit., t. IV, p. 471.

** See Enrico Ferri, *La Sociologie criminelle*, Paris, 1883, p. 163 et seq.

*** Dr. Franz von Liszt, *Das Verbrechen als sozial-pathologische Erscheinung*, Dresden, 1899, S. 12-14.

**** *ibid.*, S. 19.

***** Alfred Fouillé, "Les Jeunes criminels", *Revue des deux mondes*, janvier 1897, p. 418.

according to Fouillé, over half of all those arrested in Paris on various charges, are juveniles.

Parallel with juvenile *delinquency*, there has been a growth in juvenile *prostitution and suicides*, which were previously extremely rare. This is to be seen not only

*In Paris, in its busy boulevards,
Where vice and dissipation seethe*

but all over France, and beyond her borders too. In pious Germany the number of young criminals rose *almost by 50 per cent** between 1882 and 1895. In respect of *prostitution*, that pious country was not marking time either: between 1875 and 1890, the population of Berlin increased by *3 to 4 per cent* annually, with the number of prostitutes going up by *6 to 7 per cent*.**

Is it necessary to expatiate on the causes of the growth of crime and vice among juveniles? To understand those causes, it is sufficient to recall, for instance, that in France sixty per cent of juvenile "delinquents" are made up of *beggars and vagrants*, while twenty-five per cent are haled into bourgeois courts *for theft****. In consequence of the *lack of care*, which is itself connected with the more extensive use of women's hired labour, children acquire habits of *vagrancy*, and are then forced to beg and steal so as not to starve. *The growth of crime in general, and of juvenile delinquency in particular*, testifies irrefutably to the *worsening social position of the proletarian*.

We shall remark, in passing, that recognition of this indisputable fact does not obligate Social-Democrats to support the Christian Socialists' demand for a ban on women's employment at factories. The Social-Democrats hold that such a ban, far from improving the workers' social condition, would make it worse by giving a new and very powerful impulse to the grossest and cruellest forms of the exploitation of women by capital. The appearance and consolidation of such forms of exploitation have as yet never helped improve the condition of the toiling masses. That is why the Social-Democrats are utterly opposed to the reactionary proposal emanating from the Christian Socialists. This is most logical, and if mockery is in place here, it should be addressed to Mr. P. Struve, who has made so bold as to wax ironical over the alleged inconsistency of Kautsky, who has seen, in the devel-

* Von Liszt, op. cit., S. 17.

** Paul Hirsch, *Verbrechen und Prostitution*, Berlin, 1897, S. 7. Cf. an interesting book by d'Hausonville, *Salaires et misères des femmes*, Paris, 1900, which shows the close link between poverty and prostitution.

*** Ferdinand Dreyfus, *Misères sociales*, Paris, 1901, p. 8.

opment of women's employment in industry, proof of the impoverishment of the working class, but at the same time has no approval for the practical proposals advanced by a Decurtins.

XIV

In speaking of crime, one should remember that its rapid growth goes hand in hand with the soaring *number of recidivists*.* "Our punishments," F. Liszt has remarked in this connection, "exert neither a bettering nor an intimidating influence; in general, they do not prevent crime, i.e., do not hold anybody back; rather they enhance an inclination towards crime."**

That is true, but it is no less true that recidivists comprise a milieu that is morally quite distinct from so-called *fortuitous delinquency*. It is unfortunately a milieu where, if not ignorance then at least *coarsening and degradation of morals* hold almost full sway. And not only coarsening and degradation of morals. Many of its members undoubtedly bear the stamp of *degeneration*, and it is to them that the words of Maudsley apply with particular force: "There exists a class of criminals marked by defective physical and mental organisation ... the proportion is considerable of those that are feeble-minded or epileptics who go mad or are descended from families where madness has existed.*** We shall refer anyone who wants proof of these words to a highly interesting book by Dr. E. Laurent entitled *Les habitués des prisons de Paris*, which came out last year in Paris, with a no less interesting preface by Lacassagne.**** Laurent is just as far removed from the ridiculous exaggerations of the *Lambroso school* as Lacassagne is. Anyone who goes through his book carefully will gain an unshakable conviction that, when it punishes recidivists, society often penalises *degenerates*, who are a *passive and pathological product of the socio-historical process*. If the number of such people is growing, together with the number of beggars, tramps, prostitutes, pimps and other representatives of the Lumpenproletariat, then is it not clear that we still have the right to say, together with Marx:

* An exception to the general rule is presented only by several Swiss cantons, where both the overall figure and the percentage of recidivists are falling. However, such cantons cannot be taken into account because of their *exclusive position*, for which, for example, see John Cuénod, *La criminalité à Genève au dix-neuvième siècle*, Genève, 1891, pp. 116-17. Cf. Zuercher, "Die Selbstmorde im Kanton Zürich in Vergleichung mit der Zahl der Verbrechen" in *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Statistik* for 1898, Lieferung, VI. Zuercher is out to prove that the fall in *crime* is accompanied by a rise in the number of *suicides*.

** op. cit., S. 16.

*** *Le crime et la Folie*, Paris, 1880, p. 30.

**** Written in 1901.

"Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole...."²⁸⁷ This is a fact that the present-day Brentanoists and the "critics" of Marx will not be able to *talk away* (wegschwätzen) any more than Bastiat and his immediate followers were able to. In view of this unquestionable fact, we are greatly surprised by those people who consider as an extreme exaggeration the thought expressed by Marx and Engels that the workers' social condition in the Middle Ages was better than it is in capitalist society today. This thought may be unpalatable to those who would *blunt* the contradictions inherent in society today. The truth of the statement is, however, recognised not only by the "epigones" of Marx.*

At this point, Mr. P. Struve stops us to remind us of an argument of his which he considers irresistible: if the accumulation of wealth at one pole goes hand in hand with the accumulation of poverty, physical degeneration and moral debasement at the other, then how can the socialist revolution take place? Is a degenerate working class capable of effecting the greatest of all revolutions known in history?***

To this we shall reply that Marx and Engels *never counted on degenerate elements of the proletariat as a revolutionary force*. This is categorically stated both in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and the Preface to Engels's *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*.*** However, the development of capitalism brings in its wake, not only a relative (and in places, also an absolute) deterioration of the pro-

* "La condition de l'ouvrier était donc alors" (in the Middle Ages) "très supportable, et j'ajouterai, avec les enseignements que la critique moderne nous fournit, qu'elle devait être supérieure à celle de nos ouvriers.... Ce serf prétendu ... avait une situation que sollicitent comme très enviable les ouvriers de notre temps" (P. Hubert-Valleroux, *Les Corporations d'arts et métiers* etc., Paris, 1885, p. 44-45). [The worker's condition in those days (in the Middle Ages) was quite tolerable, and I would add, on the basis of data provided by modern practice, that it must have been better than our workers' condition is. That so-called slave ... lived in conditions that today's workers would call enviable.] Cf. also Alfred Franklin, *La Vie privée d'autrefois. Arts, mœurs, usages des Parisiens du XII^e au XVIII^e siècle. Comment on devenait patron*, Paris, 1889, p. 65: "La vérité qui se dégage d'une étude approfondie et impartiale du régime des corporations, c'est que la condition de l'ouvrier au treizième et au quatorzième siècle était supérieure à la condition actuelle." [The truth revealed by a profound and impartial study of the corporation system is that the worker's condition was better in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than it is today.]

** This argument, like the vast majority of all the others, has been borrowed by our "critic" from Marx's bourgeois opponents. Cf., for example, Kirkup's *History of Socialism*, p. 160. (We are quoting from the second edition, but the argument we are referring to is also to be found in the first edition.)

*** It is noteworthy that Bakunin accused Marx and Engels for their not wishing to place any hopes on an "impoverished proletariat". See *The State and Anarchy*, p. 8.

letariat's condition, it not only creates "*passive products of social decay*" but also gives food for thought to those proletarians who do not constitute part of those passive products; out of such proletarians it forms the ever growing *army of social revolution*. Pointing to the growth of pauperism, etc., Marx also spoke of "*the indignation of the working class, which is constantly growing and constantly training, is united and organised by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production*" (our italics). Consider France or Germany: despite the rapid growth of crime, prostitution and other signs of the spiritual degradation of *some elements* of the toiling masses, the working class, *taken as a whole*, is becoming ever more class-conscious and ever more imbued with the socialist spirit. *The worsening of the proletariat's social condition is in no way tantamount to the creation of conditions that hamper the development of its class consciousness*. Of course, only anarchists à la Bakunin could imagine that *poverty in itself* is the finest of all possible socialist agitators. But taken by itself, *prosperity* is far from always an "*inspirer*" of the revolutionary spirit. *Everything depends on circumstances of time and place*.

The "critics", who consider a worsening in the social position of the working class incompatible with the development of class consciousness, simply do not understand the materialist explanation of history, to which, however, they are fond of making reference. This non-understanding also affects their reasoning *on the economic conditions necessary for the proletariat's political victory over the bourgeoisie*. The political strength of any given class, say these gentlemen, is *determined* by its economic and social force. That is why an increase in the proletariat's political strength must presuppose an increase in its economic strength and, conversely, a weakening of the latter of necessity leads to a lessening of the proletariat's political significance. That is the opinion, in Germany, of David, Woltmann, Kampfmeyer and many other adherents of the "new methods".* It is doubtful whether Mr. P. Struve adheres to this view in all its plenitude, for it is a kind of conservative variety of *Bakunism*;** neither is he in agreement with Kautsky, who, in his reply to Bernstein, spoke of its theoretical bankruptcy. Necessary for the victory of the proletariat, in Mr. P. Struve's opinion, is an "organisational force", which can be acquired only by degrees, on the basis of the economic organisation and economic institutions.*** The truth is closely intertwined with error in this opinion. That an organisational force is

* Cf. Kampfmeyer, *Wohin steuert der Ökonomische und staatliche Entwicklung?* Berlin, 1901, S. 32, 33, 35, and elsewhere.

** For a characteristic of Bakunin's view in respect of politics and the economy, see my booklet *Anarchismus und Socialismus*, Berlin, 1894.

*** *Archiv*, I, 735.

necessary to the proletariat, just as it has been necessary for any other social class striving for new production relations, is indisputable: it has never been questioned by "orthodox" Marxists. But why does Mr. P. Struve think that such force can be acquired only on the basis of "economic organisation", i.e.—if we have correctly understood him—on the basis of co-operative societies and similar "economic institutions"? If the proletariat's organisational force could develop only in the measure in which its "economic institutions" do, that force *would never develop to a degree necessary and sufficient* for victory over the bourgeoisie because, in *capitalist society*, such workers' institutions will always be infinitesimal in comparison with the "institutions" controlled by the bourgeoisie.

Further, our "critic" is also right in saying that the organisational force of the proletariat—like any other force—can be acquired only *by degrees*. But why should this correct idea preclude the notion of *social revolution*? After all, the French bourgeoisie *also* acquired its organisational force by degrees, yet it was able to carry through its social revolution.

Incidentally the consideration that the *gradual* acquisition of organisational force is inevitable is only one of the smaller cannon placed by Mr. P. Struve next to some very big-calibre siege guns in the theoretical battery that holds under fire, in his article, the concept of *social revolution*, which is so repugnant to him. According to our original plan, we were to have attacked that battery in the article now lying before the reader, but then we saw ourselves constrained to analyse in detail the theory of the blunting of social contradictions from the economic point of view. That is why we have had to put off to our next article our attack against the battery erected against the concept of social revolution. In that article we shall finally settle accounts with our "critic", and we shall see with greater clarity the kind of "Marxism" he is now preaching.

ARTICLE THREE

I

Mr. P. Struve is known to be given to dilating on '*epistemology*'. True he has not to date found it necessary (or possible) to set forth his "epistemological" views with any degree of coherence and consistency. It is even doubtful whether he has any coherent views of that kind, which does not prevent him from making reference to "epistemology" in all suitable and, which is far worse, all unsuitable cases. In view of that, one cannot be surprised at "epistemological" considerations comprising his main weapon in the struggle against "*social revolution*".

To show us how groundless that "theoretical pseudo-notion" is, our "critic" explains how "evolutionism" should be understood by anyone who does not wish to sin against the *theory of knowledge*. Here is what we have learnt from him on this score.

The principle of evolution, while saying nothing on *why* changes take place, does tell us most definitely *how* they take place. It acquaints us with their form, and form can be defined by a single word: *continuity* (die Stetigkeit). It is only uninterrupted change that we can understand. That is why the old proposition *natura non facit saltus* (Nature does not make leaps) should be supplemented with another proposition *intellectus non patitur saltus* (the intellect does not tolerate leaps). After crossing a certain limit, *quantitative changes* turn into *qualitative*, says Hegel. This formula is often referred to by orthodox Marxists, who naively imagine that it gives a real explanation of the course of social revolution. In fact, however, it does not explain phenomena but merely describes them with the aid of logical categories,* emphasising the continuous nature of change. That is why references to it lack all conviction. We must inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the notion of social revolution does not stand up to criticism and has to be bracketed together with the notion of freedom of will (in the sense of action without cause), the substantiality of the soul, and so on; since the times of Kant, we have known that these notions are very important in the practical sense, but are wholly groundless from the angle of theory.

That is the line of argument followed by Mr. P. Struve, who is most industrious in bolstering his arguments with quotations from the writings of Schuppe, Kant, Sigwart, Ziehen and even ... Mr. F. Kistyakovsky. Though Heine was right when he said that quotations embellish writers, we more and more arrive at the conviction, as we follow the reasoning of our "critic", that far from all writers who "adorn" themselves with quotations are marked by clarity and consistency of thought.

If the notion of *social revolution* does not stand up to criticism, then the question arises: what about those social revolutions which have already taken place in history? Should they be considered as *never having taken place*, or should it be admitted that they were not revolutions in the meaning attached to the word by orthodox Marxists? But even if we said that, for instance, the French Revolution never took place in fact, that would hardly be believed by anyone. And were we to assert that that great revolution in no way resembled the one that orthodox Marxists speak of, those obstinate people would at once interrupt us, indicating that we were distorting the facts. In the opinion of orthodox Marxists, the French Revolution was a social revolution in the full sense of

* *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik*, Bd. XIV, Heft 5/6, S. 679.

the word. True it was a *revolution of the bourgeoisie*, and—in the opinion of orthodox Marxists—it is now the turn of the *proletarian revolution*. But that does not change matters. If the notion of *social revolution* is groundless because Nature makes no leaps and the intellect does not tolerate them, then such firm arguments should apply in equal measure both to the *revolution of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat*. And if the bourgeois revolution took place long ago, although leaps are “impossible” and changes are “continuous”, then we have every reason to think that the proletarian revolution will also take place in due time if only, of course, it does not come up against obstacles more serious than those indicated by Mr. P. Struve in his “epistemological” arguments.

But let us take a closer look at those arguments.

The Hegelian “formula” *does not explain* phenomena but only *describes them*. That is so, but that is not the question. It is whether the *description* given by the “formula” is *right or wrong*. If it is right, then the “formula” is obviously correct; if the “formula” is correct, then it is no less obvious that Hegel was right; if it is obvious that Hegel was right, then it is just as obvious that the *continuous nature of changes*—which, as Mr. P. Struve himself acknowledges, is *indicated* by Hegel’s “formula”—does not preclude the possibility of those very “leaps” which, it is asserted, Nature does not make and the intellect does not tolerate.

II

It should be noted that, in general, “leaps” make mock of our “critic”, and irresistibly penetrate even into the area of his own line of reasoning. That is best of all brought out by an excerpt he has made from Sigwart.

Sigwart says that if some thing changes before our eyes, for example, if blue paper turns red, or a piece of wax placed in a stove melts, then we are dealing with a *continuous process* that gives us no reason to suppose that a given substance is replaced by another one. On the contrary, the continuity of changes taking place here convinces us that the thing has remained the same even when there has been a change in all its immediately perceptible properties, such as temperature, colour, external appearance and so on.

These arguments of Sigwart’s are quoted by our “critic” as revealing the groundlessness of the notion of *social revolution*. Actually, far from destroying that notion, they support it. They reply—inasmuch as they do reply—to the question: *in what conditions and why a given object continues to remain that very object for us despite the changes it has undergone*. However they contain not the slightest proof of the idea that rapid and radical changes

we are entitled to call leaps are impossible in the objects about us. The reverse is true: one of the examples given by Sigwart reminds us most convincingly that such changes are quite possible, fully natural and not at all amazing. When a piece of wax placed in a stove melts, an entire revolution takes place in its state: it *was* hard, but *has become* liquid. And although this fundamental change, of course, presupposes a more or less "*continuous*" process or a more or less "*gradual*" heating of the wax,* that change itself takes place, not "*gradually*" but *suddenly* as soon as the temperature necessary for melting is reached. What undoubtedly does take place here is a most indubitable saltus, yet Mr. P. Struve has undertaken to prove to us that Nature makes no leaps and that the intellect does not tolerate them. How can that be? Or perhaps he has in view only his own intellect, which indeed *does not tolerate leaps* for the simple reason that he, as they say, "*cannot tolerate*" the dictatorship of the proletariat.

If, after going to the trouble of gaining a correct understanding of Sigwart's arguments, we will wish to apply them to human societies, we shall have to say, for instance, the following: we are convinced that, in the early nineteenth century, France remained France ("*that very*" country) although, at the end of the eighteenth century, there took place in it a social upheaval known by the name of the Great Revolution; we are sure of that, in the first place, because all the changes in that country during and after the revolution took place continuously in a definite territory ("in a given place"); secondly, because in many respects (for instance in respect of race and language), the population of that country was the same in the nineteenth century as it was before the revolution; in the third place, because ... but there is no need for us to enumerate all these "because"; we have only to show that the question of why and when a given thing (or country) continues to *remain for us "the very same"* is one thing, while the question of whether the rapid and radical changes called revolutions (or similar to them) are possible and thinkable in the organisation of human societies (or in the properties of things) is something else. Even if the authors quoted by Mr. P. Struve gave us a most exhaustive reply to the *first* of these questions, that gratifying circumstance would nevertheless give us no right, or even any semblance of right, to decide the *second* question in a negative sense.

* The reader will understand that continuity of heating is not a must. If, after raising the temperature of the wax to a degrees I stop heating it and let it cool to $\frac{a}{2}$, and then begin heating it again until it melts, the result will be the same as when the heating is continuous; only it will take more time and more calories.

Mr. P. Struve may perhaps object that, however matters may stand with the Sigwart quotation and with several of his other quotations, the excerpt from Kant is a reply to the second question. Let us read through that passage, which we shall quote in full:

"Any change ... is possible only because of the continuous operation of causality.... There is no distinction of the real in a phenomena just as no distinction in the magnitude of times even of the smallest; thus a new state of reality arises from the first, where it did not exist, through all the infinite degrees, all the distinctions between which from one another are always less than the distinction between *O* and *A*."*

It may seem to follow hence that "leaps" are impossible and there again arises before us the vexing question of what we are to do with the "leaps" that have already taken place in history. However, after some reflection we discover that this awesome quotation is not as intimidating as our "critic" imagines.

Kant is speaking of *states* that differ from one another *only in magnitude*.** What is meant by a series of consecutive states that differ from one another only in magnitude? It is a series of *quantitative changes*. Kant says that the series is *continuous* in the sense that *leaps* in it are unthinkable. Let us assume that that is true; but what has that to do with the question of whether leaps are possible *when quantitative changes develop into qualitative ones*? Nothing at all: the question is in no way solved by our learning from Kant that leaps are impossible in a continuous process of changes in quantity. We noted above that, according to the self-same Mr. P. Struve, Hegel's "formula" also speaks of the continuous nature of changes. We can now add that it recognises changes as continuous in the measure that they remain *quantitative*, but it declares that leaps are inevitable when quantity develops into quality. If Mr. P. Struve wished to disprove Hegel—and, together with him, the orthodox Marxists—he should have aimed his critical blows at this very spot. He should have shown that quantity does *not* develop into quality, or—if it does develop—that there is no leap in this case, nor can there be one. In fact, Mr. P. Struve has limited himself to quoting from the *Critique of Pure Reason* a passage that says that leaps are impossible *in cases of changes of quantity*. What strange logic! What an amazing "critic"!

* *Critique of Pure Reason*, [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian book] translated by N. M. Sokolov, St. Petersburg, p. 184. Mr. P. Struve quotes from the second German edition published by Dr. Karl Kehrbach, where the above-quoted lines may be found on pp. 194-95.

** "If state *B* differs from state *A* only in magnitude, then", etc. (ibid., p. 183 of the Russian translation by Sokolov [italics are ours].)

Kant goes on to say that a given magnitude of reality arises by passing through the ever lesser degrees lying between finite moments of change. But *what kind* of emergence, and emergence of *what*, is he referring to? To this question he replies in categorical terms: what arises is not Substance, whose quantity always remains invariable in Nature, but *only a new state of Substance*.^{*} Very good. Let us remember that, and ask ourselves: is the emergence of a new *state* (of Substance) the only thinkable kind of emergence? Cannot a new *relation* (between the parts of Substance) arise? It not only can arise, but it is constantly arising. Not only is it constantly arising, but it should constantly arise in consequence of those very changes in the state of Substance that Kant is in fact referring to, i.e., *in consequence of its motion*. It is this emergence of new relations that is the area in which quantity develops into quality, and "*continuous change*" leads to "*leaps*".

III

When oxygen unites with hydrogen, does the newly-formed molecule of water go through "all the innumerable degrees" separating it from a molecule of hydrogen (or oxygen)? We do not think so, for the simple reason that one cannot even imagine intermediate "*degrees*" between water and its component elements. *That kind of continuity is unthinkable; "the intellect cannot tolerate" it.*

Let us take another example. Let us suppose that a country has passed a law limiting the working day to nine hours, but the workers find that their labour still lasts too long and demand that the working day be reduced to eight hours. Their demand is finally met by the legislators and from such and such a date, say January 1 of the following year, the eight-hour working day becomes law. The question is whether one can speak here of any "innumerable stages" between the new law and the old one? Of course, not: there have been no such stages; the legislators moved the limit of the working day by one hour, and *immediately*. This was a saltus, though, of course, of less awesome proportions than a social revolution, and if we, "*without tolerating leaps*", begin to speak of "*continuity*", we shall soon have to admit that none existed *here*, which is why the intellect "*does not tolerate*" it *here*. It follows that even in "*social reform*" one cannot do without leaps.

And here is another example, somewhat more "*revolutionary*": on February 24, 1848, the *Republic* was proclaimed, in the Paris Hôtel de Ville. Let Mr. P. Struve tell us what the "innumerable degrees" between the July monarchy and the Second Republic did and *could* consist in. Could it have been in the revolutionary

^{*} *ibid.*, pp. 182, 183 of the same translation (italics are again ours).

movement of the insurgent people of Paris who, gradually and by overcoming the resistance of the troops, thereby gradually decreased the chances of the preservation of the monarchy? However, it would be very strange to refer to this victorious *uprising* of the people as proof that *leaps* are impossible. By resorting to such references, Mr. P. Struve would be proving the reverse of what he is out to prove.

Kant himself has remarked that *change is undergone* only by those objects that "*remain*", i.e., continue to exist. Inception—like disappearance—is *not at all a change in what arises or disappears*.^{*} But if that is so—and indeed it is so—then it is obvious that change in general, and consequently, gradual and *continuous* change, explains *neither emergence nor disappearance*. And if we can explain neither the emergence nor the disappearance of objects, we *do not understand them* in general, and there can be no talk of a scientific attitude towards them on our part.

The continuity Kant speaks of is that very continuity that Leibnitz elevated to the law which he named *Loi de continuité*. But that very Leibnitz recognised that, when dealing with "*choses composées*", we discover that a small change sometimes brings about very great action, i.e., in other words, causes a *break in gradualness, a leap*. Such leaps are impossible, in Leibnitz's words, only in "*simple things*" ("*à l'égard des principes ou des choses simples*"), because that would contradict the Divine Wisdom.^{**} Leaving aside the matter of Divine Wisdom, we shall note that all the examples cited by us above have been taken from the field of "*des choses composées*", which means that Leibnitz himself would not have set about objecting to them from the viewpoint of the "*law of continuity*". But are we saying that he would not have set about objecting? It seems to us that, had he foreseen the kind of use that his "*law*" would be put to by certain would-be philosophers of a certain future period, he would have added, in respect of them, some kind of caustic reservation, if only he would not have been afraid to give offence to those always numerous conservative gentlemen whose "*intellect*" had for so long eschewed "*leaps*", especially where it comes to the "*chose composée*" called socio-political relations.

* "Veränderung ist eine Art zu existieren welche auf eine andere Art zu existieren eben desselben Gegenstandes erfolgt. Daher ist alles, was sich verändert, *bleibend* und nur sein Zustand wechselt" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, herausgegeben von Kebrbach, 2. Auflage, S. 179). [Change is a kind of existence which follows another kind of existence of the same object; therefore, everything that changes, *continues to exist* and only its *condition* changes.]

** Since we do not have the works of Leibnitz on hand, we shall refer at least to *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* by Ueberweg, Berlin, 1880. III. Theil, S. 130.

We shall note, in passing, that, in "choses simples" too, the question of leaps is not solved quite as simply as it seemed to Leibnitz and Kant. Let us take, for instance, the reasoning made already familiar to us by the author of *Critique of Pure Reason*.

He says that a new magnitude of reality ($A-B$) arises through all the lesser degrees contained between A and B . Let us assume that this is so, and take two immediately consecutive degrees of those lying between the points indicated. The question is: how does that magnitude of reality arise which is equal to the difference between these two degrees? Here only two things can be supposed: 1) that it arises *immediately* or 2) that it arises *gradually*. If it arises *gradually*, that means that it itself goes through many intermediate degrees. But that is contrary to the condition of our task, since we have taken two degrees that are *immediately* consecutive. Consequently, there remains only the second supposition, according to which the difference between the two degrees we have taken arises *at once*. That arising *at once* is one of those leaps which are alleged to be impossible. That means that it is *not* leaps that the intellect *does not tolerate*, but *continuity*.

To the thesis that leaps do not exist, but only continuity, can be contraposed with full justice the *antithesis* in the meaning of which change always takes place in reality by leaps; however, a series of small and rapidly successive leaps merges for us into one "continuous" process.

A correct theory of knowledge should of course reconcile this thesis and antithesis in a single synthesis. We cannot examine here how they can be reconciled in the area of "choses simples", for that would be taking us too far.* At this point, it is sufficient for us to know and remember that, in the "choses composées" we so often have to deal with in the study of Nature and history, leaps presuppose continuous change, while continuous change inevitably leads to leaps. These are two necessary aspects of one and the same process. Eliminate one of them mentally, and the entire process will become impossible and unthinkable.**

IV

"All is flux, nothing is stationary," said the "obscure" philosopher of Ephesus.²⁸⁸ All is flux, everything changes, the adherents of the dialectical method have always repeated. But if everything

* We shall note, however, that we would have to consider here, in the first place, the *dialectical nature of motion*.

** Hegel long ago showed the groundlessness of current arguments on the theme that Nature makes no leaps. "Es hat sich aber gezeigt," he says, "dass die Veränderungen des Seins überhaupt nicht nur das Uebergehen einer Grösse in ein andere Grösse, sondern Uebergang vom Qualitativen in das

is flux and everything changes, and if phenomena are constantly passing into each other, it is not always easy to designate the *borderlines* separating one phenomenon from another.

"For everyday purposes," says Engels, "we know and can say, e.g., whether an animal is alive or not. But, upon closer inquiry, we find that this is, in many cases, a very complex question, as the jurists know very well. They have cudgelled their brains in vain to discover a rational limit beyond which the killing of the child in its mother's womb is murder. It is just as impossible to determine absolutely the moment of death, for physiology proves that death is not an instantaneous, momentary phenomenon, but a very protracted process.

"In like manner, every organic being is every moment the same and not the same; every moment it assimilates matter supplied from without, and gets rid of other matter; every moment some cells of its body die and others build themselves anew; in a longer or shorter time the matter of its body is completely renewed, and is replaced by other molecules of matter, so that every organic being is always itself, and yet something other than itself."*

Mr. P. Struve, who is familiar of course with these considerations, is out to ascribe to orthodox Marxists something they have never thought or wished to say. He rebukes them for their expecting to find a gulf where in fact there can be only a level and almost imperceptible crossing. He has described as lacking any reasonable foundation in theory their talk of the social revolution, one that would mean a sharp—and, in fact, impossible—line of demarcation between two social systems, the capitalist and the socialist.

Such arguments can disconcert only that Marxist who has not yet evolved a coherent world-outlook. The Marxist who has given careful thought to the basic propositions of his theory knows that, in fact, development does not take place exactly as the "critics" would like it to. If I see that heating turns ice into water, and water into steam, then I will have to make a considerable effort

Quantitative und umgekehrt sind: ein Anderswerden, das ein Abbrechen des Allmählichen und ein Qualitative-Anderes gegen das vorhergehende Dasein ist" ("Wissenschaft der Logik", *Hegels Werke*, III. Band, zweite Auflage, S. 434). [But we have shown that, in general, changes of the Being are not only the transition of one magnitude into another, but also the transition of the Quantitative into the Qualitative, and vice versa...] Mr. P. Struve imagines that the quotations so ill-advisedly culled by him from various authors refute this idea of Hegel's. In fact, however, they do not contain even a hint at its refutation. For a more detailed exposition of Hegel's theory of leaps, see our booklet *A New Defender of the Autocracy, or the Woe of Mr. Tikhomirov*.

* *The Development of Scientific Socialism*, translated by V. Zasulich, second edition, Geneva, 1893, p. 18 [Plekhanov is quoting from the Russian translation by Vera Zasulich, published in Geneva].²⁸⁹

to fail to notice the *leaps* prepared here by *gradual change*. Of course, it is not everywhere that such leaps take place. But even where they do not take place, or where what we see as a leap consists, in fact, of a series of gradual but imperceptible transitions—even in such cases we often have every possibility of distinguishing between phenomena with a degree of precision sufficient for the definite purpose we are pursuing. Thus, though death is a *process* that takes place more or less slowly and is not a sudden *act*, we are able, in the vast majority of cases, to distinguish between the living and the dead, so that if Ivan beheads Semyon with a stroke of an axe, we can say, without fear of falling into error, that the severance of Semyon's head from his body is an act that has deprived him of life. It is the same in the field of sociopolitical phenomena. Social evolution in no way precludes social *revolutions*, which are *moments* in the former. A new society burgeons "within the womb of the old one", but when the time of "*delivery*" arrives, the slow course of development breaks off and the "old order" ceases to contain the new one within its "womb", for the simple reason that *it disappears together with the latter*. That is what we call *social revolution*. If Mr. P. Struve wants to get a graphic idea of the social revolution, we would again refer him to the great social upheaval in France that put an end to the existence of that ancien régime within which the third estate had so long developed. Mr. Struve holds that the capitalist order is not fated to die such a rapid and violent death. We will let him think exactly as he wishes, but would ask him to produce, in defence of that opinion, something more convincing than his clumsy and feeble considerations regarding "*continuity*".

While these arguments of our "critic" do not hold water on the plane of logic, they present interest in the *psychological* aspect. It is from this angle that a comparison with certain arguments used by Herr Bernstein will present interest.

In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, Engels said that the world is a totality of processes in which things and their images in the mind, i.e., *notions*, undergo constant change. Herr E. Bernstein has found it necessary to subject this proposition of Engels's to "*criticism*", declaring that "in principle" (prinzipielle) he "of course" recognises the proposition as correct (sicherlich, richtig), but feels doubt as to the measure that the underlying idea is correct (welche Tragweite dürfen wir dem ihm zu Grunde liegenden Gedanken beilegen) and how the words *constant change* should be understood. To explain what has seemed doubtful to him, Herr Bernstein has cited the following example: according to the physiologists, the components of the human organism undergo constant change: during a period that does not exceed ten years a complete replacement of the entire substance takes place in that organism. It

may therefore be said that, at any given minute, any person is not exactly what he was a minute before, and after the expiration of a certain period of time he has undergone complete material change. Despite all this, however, he remains the same *person* as before. True, he ages and undergoes change. He develops, but that development is determined by the properties of his organism, and though it could be slowed down or speeded up, it cannot lead to a particular man turning into a creature of another kind. It is on this basis that Herr E. Bernstein has thought that Engels's proposition cited above should be modified as follows: the world is a totality of ready-made things and processes. We see in it processes, for the completion of which less than a single second is necessary, but also such processes for which centuries or even millennia are essential and which, from the practical point of view, can be termed *eternal*. It is sometimes not only possible but even necessary to abstract ourselves from certain specific features in things, for the sake of certain aims of research or exposition. However, the dialectical formulas, Herr E. Bernstein thinks, prompt such abstraction even when it is quite impermissible, or permissible only within certain limits. Therein lurks the danger of dialectical formulas.

We would not like to deal here with the question of the measure in which the *amendment* made by Herr Bernstein *amends* Engels. Neither shall we expatiate here on the amazing and purely school-girl naïveté of Herr Bernstein's "critical" remarks. The main distinctive feature in him as a "critic" of the philosophical and sociological foundations of Marxism consists in general in a non-understanding of the object he is criticising.* But we are not in the least concerned with that here; we only want to find out the meaning of the rebuke addressed by Herr Bernstein to dialecticians in general, and Marxists in particular. In brief, they are rebuked for giving insufficient consideration to the specific features of things. In noting that, let us recall what Mr. P. Struve rebukes the orthodox Marxists for.

With him, these people focus too much attention on the specific features of the opposite concepts of *capitalism* and *socialism*, and betray dialectics by losing sight of the gradual and continuous development of the forms of social life.**

Thus we have before us *two diametrically opposite reproofs*: according to Herr Bernstein, it is *development* that prevents the orthodox Marxists from seeing ready-made *things*; according to Mr. Struve, they do not see *development* because of their sharply delineated *concepts*. According to Herr Bernstein, they are too

* For his exploits in the field of "criticism", see our article "Cant against Kant or Herr Bernstein's Will and Testament" in No. 2-3 of Zarya.

** *Archiv*, S. 688.

loyal to dialectics; according to Mr. Struve they are insufficiently loyal to it.

Both these reproofs emanate from one and the same source—an incorrect idea of dialectics.

For some reason, Herr Bernstein thinks that dialectics ignores what Hegel called the *rights of the mind*, i.e., does not show concern for a precise definition of notions. For some reason, Mr. P. Struve imagines that taking the "rights of the mind" into account means betraying dialectics.

In actual fact, however, it is a distinctive feature of people capable of dialectical thinking that they are free of both these shortcomings: they know that the development of any "thing" leads to its *negation* and its transition into *another "thing"*. But they also know very well that this process of transition of one thing into another can be understood by us only when we learn to distinguish between them, and do not allow our notions of them to merge into one indifferent whole: in fact, it is a question of the *emergence of various things, not of constant change in one and the same thing*. To express the matter in Hegel's words, it can be said that only he remains loyal to the dialectical method who is able to give both *reason* and *mind* their due. He who forgets the rights of "reason" becomes a *metaphysician*, he who loses sight of the rights of "the mind" falls into *scepticism*.*

Anyone who imagines that the adherents of the dialectical method *disregard* the rights of the "mind" have just as poor an understanding of the actual nature of that method as one who sees in a *considerate attitude* to those rights a betrayal of dialectics. The first instance is that of Herr Bernstein; the second, that of Mr. P. Struve.

Incidentally, what is this all to Messrs. Struve and Bernstein? It would be most mistaken to imagine that what is called criticism of Marxism is out to meet some serious theoretical need. In essence the "critics" care very little for theory. What they want is to overcome, or at least to weaken a certain practical trend—the *revolutionary trend* of the class-conscious proletariat. To them, "criticism" serves as a weapon in the "spiritual struggle" against that trend; their arguments present value to them only inasmuch as they help to present in an unfavourable light a concept that is so obnoxious to them—that of the *social revolution*. This practical aim justifies all and any theoretical means, and if one "critic" advances against the orthodox Marxists an accusation that is wholly incompatible with an accusation simultaneously advanced

* On this, see Hegel's "Big" Encyclopedia, § 81 and the Supplement to it. Cf. also *Die Phenomenologie des Geistes*, Bamberg und Würzburg, 1807, S. 134 und folg. Hegel has aptly remarked that "das Etwas ist die erste Negation der Negation" (*Werke*, III, S. 114).

against them by another "critic", there is no *contradiction* here, but only *variety in unity*. Both "critics" are in full accord between themselves that Carthage, i.e., the concept of *social revolution*, should be destroyed. It is this that makes them *fellow-thinkers* and creates the mutual sympathy between them. As for the *pretext* to be chosen for this destruction of Carthage, that is something each of them decides in his own manner, nothing embarrassed by the pretext chosen by him personally stripping of any meaning the pretext chosen by his ally. It is with good reason that the "critics" rebel against what is "stereotype"!

As we have seen, the theory of evolution which Mr. Struve defends has, on the plane of theory, the basic shortcoming that it *leaves room only for change in things that have already arisen, but not for the inception of new ones*. But this is a shortcoming to which a blind eye is willingly turned both by Mr. P. Struve himself and the entire learned and semi-learned, big and petty bourgeoisie, who are out to overcome, with the aid of the "spiritual weapon", the socio-revolutionary strivings of the proletariat. The conservative class instinct, which always makes mock of the ideologists of the upper classes, is now making mock of the bourgeois "epistemologists". It makes them take pride in their numerous and glaring theoretical errors, flaunt them in the way a peacock spreads its magnificent tail, and look down on those who have avoided such mistakes.

V

The reader will probably tell us that there can be no talk of Messrs. P. Struve and E. Bernstein harbouring the *conservative* instinct because, whatever their attitude to *social revolution*, they are firm supporters of *social reform*. The trouble is that a firm defence of social reform today exists cheek by jowl with the *conservative instinct of the bourgeoisie*.

Here, for instance, is what Herr Werner Sombart has to say about this: "A thought that, during the second half of the present century, has engaged the finest minds, i. e., the possibility, within the near future, of social production without the capitalist entrepreneur—that thought lives today only in the representatives of a dying generation of social visionaries. We now know that entrepreneur can become superfluous only through a slow organic process.... There is room for intensive and extensive work by capitalism for entire centuries to come.... And we take pleasure in welcoming the prospects, for many years to come, of seeing at the head of our economic progress people who today too are guiding social life: masterly entrepreneurs, imperial merchants and directors of big joint-stock companies, and further, almost just

as important—the leaders of our state, urban, and co-operative businesses.”*

The prospect of seeing masterly entrepreneurs, the directors of big joint-stock companies, imperial merchants and their like in the van of economic progress is wholly inseparable from the prospect of seeing that estimable fraternity “*at the head*” of the *exploiters of wage labour*. A man who “takes pleasure in welcoming” one prospect will be just as gratified to greet the other. Such a man indubitably adheres to the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, whose interests he holds dear. Its instinct of self-preservation speaks through him, yet he is an ardent defender of “socialism”.

“But that does not at all mean,” he assures us, “that socialist ideals should capitulate to the colossal sphere of activities of present-day capitalism: *rather the reverse; it is along the capitalist road that they get the possibility of realisation*. This is true in two cases: if we consider as the socialist ideal the planned management of production and the unbridled forces of market circulation with the aid of an alliance of cartels; also when we bring into the foreground the defence of the interests of labour against those of property. The latter ideal is achieved through the slow transformation of the dominant economic order; to this refer factory legislation, the state insurance of workers and, in general, all reforms in legislation and administration which replace the initial private compact on the hiring of workers with a relationship based on public law.”**

What is meant by “the interests of property”, i.e., the interests of capitalist property, that of those merchants, shareholders and entrepreneurs to whom Herr Werner Sombart has with such pleasure foretold so lengthily a predominance? They mean the interests of the exploitation of wage labour. To defend the interests of wage labour against those of property means lowering the level of worker exploitation by the capitalists. The question arises: has that level fallen as a result of the reforms in the relation between labour and capital which has been dinned into our ears by the adherents of the theory of the gradual “voiding” of capitalism? No, that has not been the case till now! On the contrary, we know very well that, despite all these reforms, the *relative share* of the working class in the social income has *fallen* in all the advanced capitalist countries. But that means a *higher level of the exploitation of the working class and a growth in its dependence on the capitalists*. Consequently, the above-mentioned reforms have

* *Without Fail! From the Theory and History of the Trade Movement*. Translated from the German and published in the supplement to the Russian translation of the book by W. Kulemann, *The Trade Union Movement*, St. Petersburg, 1901, pp. 95-96.

** *ibid.*, p. 96, italics by W. Sombart.

not brought about any *tangible* changes in the capitalist relations of production and do not at all restrict *the essential rights of capitalist ownership*. And if the entire "socialism" possible today boils down to such reforms, then it is in no way surprising that the "socialist ideals" are best of all achieved on a *capitalist* foundation. The advanced industrial bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries realised long ago that the achievement of *such "ideals", far from harming them, brings them considerable benefit*. That is why, after coming out so resolutely in the past against state intervention in the attitude of labour to capital and against worker trade unions, they are now themselves ready to call for such intervention and help such unions to appear. They have realised that, as one of the bourgeois Pindars of trade unionism has put it, "in the big machine shop, the retail buying of labour is nonsense and absurdity."* That is why the bourgeoisie's publicists and scholars have come out as convinced propagandists of a "socialism" of that kind.**

As a scholarly bourgeois, who knows a good thing when he sees one, Herr Werner Sombart waxes highly eloquent when he speaks of *socialism ... on a capitalist basis*. But note, dear reader, that this kind of socialism is the selfsame and well-publicised "*social reform*" so insistently recommended and so skillfully depicted by Messrs E. Bernstein, P. Struve *e tutti frutti*. We shall not say that Herr W. Sombart's "socialist ideals" fully coincide with our "critics'" plans of social reform. They may even differ in some things, but we can confidently say that Herr W. Sombart's "socialism" is distinct from Mr. P. Struve's "social reform" no more than two varieties of one and the same species are. *This is a variation on one and the same theme*. That is why Mr. P. Struve lauds Herr W. Sombart to the skies, while the latter places such great hopes on Mr. P. Struve's "neo-Marxism".*** Birds of a feather flock together: these two birds are guided by one and the same class instinct.

In his well-known book, Mr. Berdayev has given excellent expression to that concept of the gradual reform of capitalist

* Paul Bureau, *Le Contrat de travail, le rôle des syndicats professionnels*, Paris, 1902, p. 257.

** Incidentally, it should be noted that, in Britain, the attitude of bourgeois public opinion to trade unions has begun of late to undergo a sharp change. Now practically every issue of *Justice*²⁹⁰ contains some fresh news on the course of the "war" on the trade unions. The British bourgeoisie seem to be returning to the idea that the trade unions are hampering their competitiveness with other countries on the world market. If this "war on the trade unions" does not cease soon, the British bourgeoisie's "socialism" will recede into oblivion, after showing that even with all its innocuousness it can live side by side with capitalism only up to a certain limit.

*** See the third edition of his *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung im XIX. Jahrhundert*, Jena, 1900, S. 126-27.

society which is peculiar to "critics" à la P. Struve. "The corrections made by capitalist development itself," he says, "will darn the holes of existing society until the entire social fabric all becomes entirely new."* It would be difficult to put things more neatly. The trouble is that giving neat expression to an idea does not yet mean eliminating the elements of error in it. The appearance of a new "social fabric" as a consequence of a thorough darning of the old one is the *only instance, recognised by the "critics", of a transition of quantity into quality*. But this case is a dubious one. If I darn *stockings*, they will remain stockings and will not turn into *gloves*, even in the extreme case of the entire fabric undergoing a hundred per cent renovation. It is the same with darning the holes in capitalist society. The capitalist mode of production became established thanks to the *elimination* of the feudal-guild system, and not as a result of any *darning* of the latter. It is wholly incomprehensible how and why darning the capitalist "fabric" can and should (even through the slowest of changes) lead to the *elimination of capitalist production relations and their replacement by socialist ones*. The figurative expression employed by Mr. Berdayev can only serve to bring out in higher relief the untenability of the kind of theory of evolution defended by the "critics". We have already seen that this theory is capable of explaining *only a change* in already existing "things", not the *emergence* of new ones. We can now clearly see that it can serve as theoretical guidance *only to those whose "socialist ideals" do not go farther than "continucus" darning of the holes in capitalist society*. To those who would create a new social system, that theory is *absolutely pointless*. It is a theory of bourgeois *social reform* brought out in opposition to the theory of the *socialist revolution of the proletariat*.

To "continuously" darn the old, and just as "continuously" to think that the darned *old stuff* "continuously" turns into something quite *new* means "continuously" believing in a miracle that frankly and "continuously" sets all the laws of human thinking at naught. And this *faith*, which, on the plane of theory, is nothing but an *unnatural vice*, is now ascribed to what is called the utopianism of the orthodox Marxists! What "critics"!

In actual fact, it is the theorists of "*darning*", not the orthodox Marxists, that are the utopians. However, the utopianism of such theorists is a special and new brand of utopianism, one that has never existed in the history of social theories. A faith in the thaumaturgical force of "darning" coexists peacefully in the "critics'" minds with a thorough and ineradicable "sobriety" which so

* «Субъективизм и индивидуализм» (Subjectivism and Individualism), p. 260.

reasonably contents itself with the joyful consciousness that—as Gleb Uspensky said in one of his works—postage stamps will become cheaper by a whole kopek in some future period of history. But that is not all. That utopia is just as unthinkable without that sobriety, as “*bottom*” is unthinkable without “*top*”, and a *positive* pole without a *negative* one. The philistine and sober “minds” of the theorists of darning “do not tolerate” any other “leaps” except cheaper postage stamps in all the distant future. And they unreservedly obey the voice of their “intellect” in everything pertaining to practical activities. They have, in practice, ushered in the epoch of that *conscious* opportunism which is the more self-satisfied, the more fully and conveniently its demands fit into the scheme of “*darning*”. But the more proudly aware they become of their sobriety, the more unshakeable is their conviction that they are permitted to indulge in *pipe dreams*. They have complacently permitted themselves to *believe* that patches superimposed on other patches will produce a new “social fabric” and that cheaper postage stamps will mark the onset of a golden age. However, the faith of the “critics” in no way resembles the vulgar and blind faith of ordinary mortals: it is *thoroughly imbued with disbelief*, since the “critics” *believe* in what they themselves have declared to be *theoretically untenable*. It is a faith of which only the Kantians are capable, people who first show themselves and others that not a single of the arguments advanced to prove the existence of God stands up to criticism, and then acquire a sudden “faith” in God. The psychology of such “believers” is somewhat reminiscent of the psychology of Gogol’s Podkolesin, a man who is well aware, in his heart of hearts, that he has not the least wish to marry and that he will never take himself a wife. His distaste for the bonds of matrimony will yield to no Kochkarevs. That, however, does not prevent him from saying, “When you begin to think, when you are at leisure, you realise that it is time to marry after all. Why not? You go on living and then you begin seeing things in such a gloomy light.... Indeed, you begin to feel a twinge of conscience....”²⁹¹ The only difference is that Podkolesin lacks that “critical” education that marks the reformers of the new school. Under the influence of his own words, Podkolesin becomes marriage-minded at least at times and briefly, whereas the “critics” in no wise go beyond “darning”, for they are never abandoned by the thought that the *renovation of the social fabric is a utopia*. If the “critics” are not making mock of readers who are not blessed with “critical” grace and if they really believe in what, in their words, precludes belief, then what we have before us is a highly interesting case of “*dual consciousness*”.

“Any socialist,” Mr. P. Struve writes, “proceeds from socialism as a politico-moral ideal; to him, socialism is a regulative

idea with whose aid he subjects individual events and actions to politico-moral appraisal and measurement. It is no different with a whole class which, organised in a party, operates ... as a single politico-moral subject. In the ideal, the Social-Democratic movement should subject itself to an ultimate aim, for otherwise it will disintegrate. Faith in an ultimate aim is the religion of Social-Democracy; that religion is no 'private matter' but a most important social interest of a party.*

And this is said with the theoretical consciousness that the "ultimate aim" is a utopia! No, say what you will, such "*religion*" is impossible without a "dual consciousness". But we Social-Democrats are in our right minds; we suffer from no "dual consciousness", and we have not the slightest need of Mr. P. Struve's "religion". We are very grateful to him for his "*regulative idea*", but we stand in no need of it either. We speak of our ultimate aim, not because it is a piece of *edifying deception* but because we are *firmly convinced of the inevitability of its achievement*. To us, a patently unachievable ideal is not an ideal but simply an immoral *trifle*. It is the *reality of the future* that is *our ideal*, that of revolutionary Social-Democracy. That it will come about is guaranteed to us by the entire course of present-day social development; that is why our confidence in its future advent is as little related in our eyes to religion as is the confidence of the "critics"—one that we share with them—that the sun which has "set" today will not fail to "rise" tomorrow. That is the question of more or less infallible knowledge, not one of more or less firm religious belief.

VI

But why is our "critic" so firmly convinced that our "*ultimate aim*" can be *only* an object of "*faith*" to us? Why does he permit us to speak of it only in view of our "divine right" to a sizeable chunk of utopia? It is because, when we speak of it, we abandon the *ground of realism*.

But what is realism? It is a Marxism revised, corrected, purified and supplemented by Mr. P. Struve.

"The realistic view set forth in this article is also based on the ideas of Marx and especially on the fundamental proposition of historical materialism regarding the constantly proceeding adaptation of law to the economy, as well as the unrealistic view that operates with the theoretical pseudo-concept of the 'social revolution'. Marx against Marx."**

In the first of our articles dealing with a critique of our "critics",

* *Archiv*, S. 698-99.

** *ibid.*, S. 690.

we showed how deplorably feeble is Mr. P. Struve's understanding of the "fundamental proposition" of historical materialism regarding the causal dependence between law and the economy. Anyone who has attentively read that article is aware that our "critic's" "realistic view" is based on a "fundamental" misunderstanding. Anyone aware of that will understand what is to be expected from such a "realistic" criticism of our "*ultimate aim*". But it will do no harm to subject that criticism as well to detailed and careful criticism.

Mr. P. Struve is mistaken in calling Marx's doctrine of the relation between the economy and law the *fundamental* proposition of historical materialism. In actual fact, it is *only one of the fundamental propositions of that theory*. Side by side with it should be placed Marx's doctrine of the relation between the economy and people's *views and sentiments* and the *aims* people set themselves in their historical advance.

Why do some of those aims appear *utopian* to us? In general, what does the criterion of "*reality*" consist in? Let us hear what Mr. P. Struve has to say.

"Movement is an historical Prius," he says. "Socialism always possesses reality in the measure in which it is contained in a movement engendered by the present-day economic order—no more and no less."*

Socialism is contained in a movement engendered by the present-day economic order. It is "*real*" only inasmuch as it is contained in the latter. Well and good. But how is socialism contained in that movement? That can be understood in either! of two ways: 1) socialism is contained in it in the measure in which it forms part of the views and sentiments of participants in the movement; 2) it is contained in it in the measure in which the participants in the movement *succeed, at a given time, in altering the reality about them in accordance with their views and their sentiments*. If we accept the first interpretation, we shall arrive at the conclusion that socialism is "*real*" inasmuch as *it is aspired towards by participants in a movement* engendered by the present-day historical order, i.e., in the measure in which it is their "*ultimate aim*". This is a perfectly logical conclusion; only it deprives our "critics" of any semblance of the right to call a *utopia* the ultimate aim of present-day Social-Democracy: an aspiration to that aim undoubtedly colours the views and sentiments of a vast part of those who have now joined the "movement engendered", etc.

What is the conclusion the *second* interpretation leads us up to? It is that socialism is real in the measure that it can be imple-

* *Archiv*, S. 698.

mented at the present time, i.e., at a time when you and I, dear reader, engage in an argument over its *reality*—"neither more nor less". Anything that cannot be carried out in that period proves a *utopia*. Well and good. In that case, however, we shall have to refer to the *realm of utopia, not only the ultimate aim of present-day Social-Democracy but also all those of its aims which cannot be effected by its current forces*. Thus the area of utopia is vastly extended, while the area of "*realistic*" activities, on the contrary, is greatly narrowed. Moreover, with us *any* social figure becomes a utopian if he sets himself any other aim than that of being nonchalant about any other aims at all. Any other aim must assuredly be *designated for the future*; any other aim *presupposes*, of necessity, *dissatisfaction with the present*, so that the fact of any given individual setting himself that aim clearly shows that he is not satisfied with *what is taking place at the present time due to the existent alignment of social forces*; any other aim implies a desire to change that alignment in one direction or another; any other aim thus leaves the boundaries of "*reality*". This, too, is a fully logical conclusion, but it is not the one arrived at by Mr. P. Struve or his "critically minded" fellow-thinkers. Though they adhere to the view regarding the "basic" condition of the "*reality*" of socialism, from which that conclusion must inescapably follow, the reasoning has not been carried through to the end; they have stopped half-way and recognise as "*real*" the kind of "socialism" which, though dissatisfied with the existing order of things, lacks the courage to go further than the "darning of holes" in its "reformatory" aspirations. Here all tasks for whose accomplishment the *elimination of capitalist relations of production* is necessary must prove *utopian*.

Now that we have learnt what the criterion of "*reality*" we are searching after consists in, we are confronted by another and even more "accursed" question: whether that criterion can be brought into accord with the *genuine*—not the "critic"—distorted—theory of Marx regarding the *aims of mankind's historical advance*.

To that question we are compelled to answer in the negative. Mr. P. Struve has presented to us, in a somewhat modified aspect, that pseudo-realist confusion of notions which was most vividly expressed in the "*Credo*"²⁹² of sad memory, and which boils down to a repetition in various keys (but always with a claim to scholarship) of the thought that our ultimate aim ceases from being a utopia only when—and, more precisely, only *if*—the entire working class, in the process of its independent development and without any participation of the *revolutionary "bacillus"*, arrives at the conviction that its interests call for the immediate achievement of that aim.

This mishmash of notions, which has misled so many* in our country, could be taken for a malicious parody of the celebrated Preface to *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, if those who indulge in it did not maintain an air of the most unruffled and unfeigned gravity.

VII

Their error stems from the following passage in that Preface: "No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation."²⁹⁴

Thus mankind always takes up only such tasks as it can solve. Consequently, if it has not yet set itself some particular task—say that of the complete elimination of the capitalist relations of production—that means that such a task cannot yet be accomplished. Consequently, only one who has abandoned the ground of *reality* and sets out for the realm of *utopia* can aspire to accomplish tasks that are beyond the capacity of our times.

That is the way many "critics" reason, and, once fortified in that view, they have no great difficulty in distinguishing between the "realistic" element and the "utopian" in the programme of Social-Democracy. As is common knowledge, it is the working class that today represents mankind's progressive aspirations towards transforming the economic relations. What, then, are the practical tasks whose accomplishment it is now engaged in? They are: a shorter working day; better hygienic conditions in the workshop; the organisation of trade unions, co-operative societies, and so on and so forth. The elimination of capitalist relations of production has not yet been included by the proletariat in the number of the *practical* questions of the day. It is this that shows that the material conditions required for the accomplishment of that task have not yet matured.

True, there is, in the proletariat, a stratum that is working for the socialisation of the means of production and the distribution of products, and has given that aim top priority in its programme. That stratum consists of *Social-Democrats*, who hope to win leadership of the *entire* proletariat. That hope may come

* See our *Vademecum* for the editorial board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* [The Workers' Cause], Geneva, 1900.²⁹³

true at some time, but until that comes about, the socialisation of the means of production and of the distribution of products will remain a *utopian* element in the Social-Democratic programme. Only those tasks are realistic for whose accomplishment the means *already* exist.

Its *metaphysical nature* is the main feature of this chain of syllogisms. Those who have thought it up reason after the manner of all metaphysicians: "Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." With them, the material conditions for the accomplishment of any particular social task *either do or do not* exist. Marx's words that such conditions may be *in the process of formation*, produce not the least impression on them, or at least in no way help them to determine where "*real*" socialism ends and where "utopian" socialism begins.

The formation of the material conditions for the accomplishment of a particular social task cannot be discerned simultaneously by *all that* "mankind" which will have to accomplish that task in due course. That "mankind" consists of strata and individuals, these being marked by a dissimilar degree of development (the strata) or even unequal natural gifts (the individuals). What has been understood by some as an historical necessity, is often not even suspected by others. Any group of people following one and the same road will almost always contain those who are *far-sighted* and see objects at a considerable distance, and those who are *near-sighted* and make out those objects only when they are close at hand. But does that mean that the far-sighted should be referred to as "utopians", while only the near-sighted can be considered "realists"? It would seem that it does not mean so. It would seem rather that the far-sighted distinguish the direction better than the rest, so that their judgement of it is closer to *reality* than that of the near-sighted. Some may be found who may wish to reproach the far-sighted for their raising the question ahead of time regarding the objects that the entire company will have to pass by later. However, in the first place, speaking too early of an *actual object* does not yet mean leaving the *ground of reality*; besides, how is one to judge whether or not it is time to raise any particular subject? Imagine to yourself that the earlier the far-sighted begin to speak, say, about a house that stands on the road and where the travellers may expect to get the rest they need, the sooner they will approach that house, because the prospect will make them increase their pace. In that case, *it cannot be too soon* for the far-sighted to *speak up*, if only the travellers hold their time at all dear.

Indeed, the role of the far-sighted would in that case greatly resemble the part played by the Social-Democrats in the overall advance of the working class.

"The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only. 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement....

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."*

What Marx and Engels have said here about the *Communists* of the forties is fully applicable to the revolutionary Social-Democrats of today.

They are fighting for the attainment of the immediate aims of the working class but they are also taking care of the future of the movement. Taking care of the future of the movement means fighting for its "ultimate aim", fighting now—today, tomorrow, and on the next day, and at any minute. If the future of the movement has been correctly understood—and it is correctly understood by those who have been able to understand the course of present-day economic development—then defending the ultimate aim does not contain a jot of utopianism. To speak of utopianism in that case means giving words a completely arbitrary meaning. Here, the "ultimate aim" is just as "*real*" as is present-day economic development.

Revolutionary Social-Democracy presents in practice the most resolute and always forward-looking part of the proletariat in all civilised lands. They refer to the rest of the proletariat almost in the same way as the *far-sighted* people in our example refer to the near-sighted.** They *already* see what other proletarians *do not yet* see, and, in explaining to the latter the road to be followed in the future, they *achieve a comprehension* of their movement

* *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Geneva, 1900, pp. 16-17 and 37.²⁹⁵

** With the difference that while the far-sighted see nearby objects worse than the near-sighted do, revolutionary Social-Democrats usually understand even the immediate interests of the workers better than those who do not recognise the "ultimate aim".

and *accelerate* it. Where, for goodness sake, can one discern a "*utopia*" here? In what way is this not "*real*"?

The fact that the revolutionary Social-Democrats are able to explain to the proletariat the future of its own movement, its "*ultimate aim*", proves that the material conditions necessary for the achievement of that aim are already in the process of formation and that the process can be discerned by those with keener sight. That is how the matter stands from the viewpoint of Marx's historical theory. Yet our "critics" have understood that theory in such an absurd way that they see as utopian any attempt made by the keen-sighted to take a closer look at the process, and determine its final result. Goodness gracious, how such gentlemen have failed to see the obvious!²⁹⁶

VIII

But perhaps the "critics" à la Struve have as yet failed to realise exactly where they have made a "bloomer"? Let us deal a little longer with these sagacious "realists". We shall follow the elementary but sometimes quite essential pedagogical device that was so often and so successfully used by the great Russian educator N. G. Chernyshevsky. It consists in reducing words to letters and syllables: *em-â: ma; em-â: ma—mama*, and so on.

Economic relations determine people's *views* and their *actions*. However, people do not always realise the nature of their own economic relations, and their views do not always develop as rapidly as does the development of their economic relations. It more often happens that *views* lag behind the *economy* more or less considerably. It is only with the passage of time and only gradually that the *new economic relations* undermine the *old views* and give rise to *new ones*. A cause always appears sooner than its effect does. Due to this indisputable circumstance, persons or groups of persons who are gifted with vision are able to play an active part in mankind's advance. Having realised the significance of existing economic relations, they explain it to those less keen of vision, thereby influencing the latter's views, and through those views also their actions, which in their turn promote the further development of a given economic order.* However, all is flux, nothing is stationary. To understand what undergoes change means realising what it will come to at the *last* stage of its development. Otherwise there can be no complete understanding, as has been known since the times of Aristotle.

* In reality, the historical process of the understanding and change in people's views is not limited to an understanding and change in *economic* views alone. We have simplified the matter to make its depiction more graphic.

A striving to determine the final stage, the ultimate outcome, of a given process of development is not only quite lawful but obligatory upon all those who wish to achieve an understanding of it. That is why people who wish to understand the economic relations in contemporary civilised societies should use all the forces of their minds to learn whither the development of those relations is proceeding and *how* the process of their development *will end*. If such people are confident that it will end in the elimination of the *capitalist relations of production and their replacement by the socialist*, and if their sympathies or their class position give them reason to rejoice at that outcome, then they *will point it out to others and will induce them to use all means to help bring about that outcome*, which will become the *ultimate aim* of all their efforts and the foundation of all their programme. And if they are not in error on that score, and if the "course of things" is indeed directed towards their ultimate aim, then they can well say that they stand on the firm ground of reality, and that *it is not they who are utopians but those who consider their ultimate aim a utopia*.

The ultimate aim of the revolutionary Social-Democracy of our times is nothing but a conscious expression of an unconscious trend inherent in the development of society today. Present-day socialism, under whose banner the revolutionary Social-Democrats are marching, has the right to be called *scientific* for the sole reason that it has at last accomplished that supremely important theoretical task which Schelling in his time set social science in his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*, a work so rich in content, namely, the task of explaining how the conscious ("free") historical activities of people, far from precluding what is called *historical necessity*, presupposes it as an essential condition. The *utopian socialists* proceeded from some abstract principle or another, and based themselves on it. The adherents of *scientific socialism* proceed from a consciousness of historical necessity, and base themselves on it. Both have an "ultimate aim", but the "ultimate aim" of the utopians referred to reality in quite a different way than does the "ultimate aim" of the adherents of scientific socialism. That is why the two are separated by a gulf, and why the adherents of scientific socialism find it so hard to make their peace with the utopian elements which are still often to be met in the programmes of socialists of a "broader" mode of thought. They do not tolerate utopias, so they have been dubbed *sectarians* and *dogmatists*, or given other flattering names.

The existing economic order has to be understood if one would exert an influence on the historical advance. To understand the existing economic order means realising the process of its devel-

opment up to and including its *final outcome*. Once that outcome has been ascertained, that *outcome* inevitably becomes our "ultimate aim" at our very first attempt at a *positive participation* in the historical advance. Drive the "*ultimate aim*" out of the door, and it will break in through the windows, if only you do not shutter them up so as to keep out any attempt to *understand* a given process of social development and any temptation to *act* in accordance with the understanding you have achieved.

For the "ultimate aim" to become, for the socialist, a more or less pious utopia which I am firmly convinced is impossible of achievement, it is necessary that I should first convince myself that the development of the present economic order will not, and cannot in its essence, have any final outcome. Once that outcome has been found impossible, then the striving to arrange all of one's activities so as to bring it closer must thereby be recognised as theoretically groundless. The impossibility of a final outcome *strips the "ultimate aim" of any foundation in reality*. But what is meant by such a recognition of the impossibility of a final outcome? It is the conviction that the *process of capitalism's development will continue constantly*, i.e., in other words, that *capitalism will exist always or at least for such an interminably long time that it is not worth while even to give thought to its abolition*. This, as you will see, is the familiar conviction of Herr W. Sombart, who has brought us the great and joyous news that socialism does not exclude capitalism, i.e., that *even the development of socialism will not put an end to the capitalist mode of production*. This is also the conviction of Mr. P. Struve and other "critics".* If such a conviction has arisen in a socialist's mind, nothing indeed remains for him but to lay aside his party's "*ultimate aim*" as a pious utopia and recognise the *darning of holes* as the only social activity standing on the *ground of reality*. That, however, can mean only that, to the socialist, the "final aim" becomes a utopia only when he *ceases to be a socialist*.

IX

Mr. P. Struve himself senses that a conviction of the practically boundless strength and "adaptability" of the capitalist mode of production is an essential *preliminary condition* of that attitude to the "*ultimate aim*" which he has recommended as the only one worthy of any thinking man. It is to inculcate that conviction

* "The only thing that permits us to confirm the data of science," Mr. S. Bulgakov assures us, "is that current economic development is leading to the gradual dying out of the most harsh and gross forms of the exploitation of man by man" («Капитализм и земледелие» [*Capitalism and Agriculture*], Vol. II, p. 456).

in us that he has set about "criticising" the concept of *social revolution* with the aid of profound "epistemological" considerations designed to show us the complete groundlessness of that "pseudo-concept", and so well summed up in the celebrated question asked by Kozma Prutkov:²⁹⁷ *"Where is the beginning of that end with which the beginning ends?"* To prepare us to accept that conviction, he has set about assuring us that social contradictions are gradually becoming "*blunted*" and that, if we look at things without the prejudices imparted to us by orthodox Marxism, we shall see that the surplus value, embodied in the surplus product, is a function of all social capital.* Given so "*realistic a view*" the concept of the worker's exploitation by the capitalist is enveloped in such a thick fog of "criticism" that we completely cease to understand for what reason and to whom—except the "utopians", the "epigones", the "dogmatists", and the like—the elimination of the capitalist relations of production is necessary, in which case the question of the socialists' "*ultimate aim*" is automatically decided: at best, we shall treat that aim slightly as a piece of elevating deception. Mr. P. Struve's "*criticism*" is full of errors and misunderstandings but it has the undoubted merit of remaining from beginning to end true to its own "*ultimate aim*".

Those who adhere to Mr. P. Struve's "*realistic view*"—and their name is legion in our country—are constantly speaking of "criticism", without which they cannot take a single step, for the demon of "criticism" tempts them day and night. But what seems very strange at the first fleeting glance is that the criticism our "critics" indulge in makes them highly susceptible to an *absolutely uncritical perception of the theories of the most recent representatives of bourgeois economics*, right down to some Böhm-Bawerk, that Bastiat of our times. And the more assiduously the weapon of "criticism" is wielded, the stronger and more complete becomes the *identity of ideas* between our "critics" on the one hand, and the professional defenders of the bourgeoisie, on the other. The demon of "criticism" which has tempted the "critics" proves the "*hobgoblin of today's bourgeoisie*".

This is strange only at a first and brief glance. On closer examination, the entire matter proves very simple and comprehensible.

Our "critics'" historical mission consists in a "revision" of Marx so as to empty his theory of all its socio-revolutionary content. Marx, whose name is so popular among the revolutionary proletariat of all civilised lands; Marx who called upon the working

* This latter thought was expressed by him in an article "The Fundamental Antinomy of the Theory of Labour Value", *Zhizn* (Life), February, 1900.

class to *forcibly* overthrow the present social order; Marx who, as Liebknecht so splendidly put it, was a revolutionary *both by sentiment and logic*—that Marx is heartily disliked by our educated petty bourgeoisie, whose ideologists the “critics” are. That bourgeoisie is repelled by his extreme conclusions; it is frightened by his revolutionary ardour. However, as things are today, it is hard to get along quite without Marx: *his* critical weapon is essential in the struggle against conservatives of all reactionary hues and utopians of the most varying Populist shades. That is why its revolutionary nature has to be weeded out of Marxist theory; to Marx the *revolutionary* must be contraposed Marx the *reformer*, Marx the “*realist*”. What we have is “*Marx against Marx*”! And so the “critics” swing into action. From Marx’s theory are ejected, one by one, all propositions that can serve the proletariat as a spiritual weapon in its revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. Dialectics, materialism, and the theory of social contradictions as stimulating social progress; the theory of value in general and the theory of surplus value in particular, social revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat—all these essential components of Marxist scientific socialism, without which it loses all its essential content—are proclaimed *secondary details* that do not correspond to the present day of science, tendentious, utopian, and therefore to be amputated in the interests of the unfettered development of that thinker’s fundamental propositions. “Marx against Marx”! The work of “criticism” proceeds “continuously”. There gradually emerges from the crucible of such “criticism” a Marx who, after proving to us in masterly fashion the historical necessity of the *rise of the capitalist mode of production*, reveals great scepticism in everything that refers to the replacement of capitalism by socialism. The “critics” have contrived to turn Marx the *revolutionary into a Marx who is almost a conservative*; all this seems to be done with the aid of his propositions. It may well be said that a similar transformation was experienced only by Aristotle, whom the medieval Scholastics turned from a pagan philosopher into something resembling a Father of the Christian Church....

“In its mystified form,” says Marx, “dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets

nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."*

To the end of his days, the real Marx remained true to this spirit of *dialectics*. It is this circumstance that is so displeasing to the "critics", who have "revised" Marx's theory from the angle of "realism". Their "revision" has resulted in a theory which, *while giving a "positive explanation" of capitalism, at the same time refuses to explain its "inevitable break-up"*, and to analyse it in its "transient aspect". From this angle, Marx, as "revised" by our "critics", *analyses only the old pre-capitalist modes of production and the political forms that developed on their foundation*. Thus, our "neo-Marxism" is the most reliable weapon of the Russian bourgeoisie in their struggle for spiritual supremacy in our country.**

Mr. P. Struve stands for "social reform". That notorious reform, as we already know, does not go further than the darning of the bourgeois social "fabric". As presented in Mr. P. Struve's theory, this reform, far from threatening the rule of the bourgeoisie, promises it support, and helps consolidate "*social peace*". If our big bourgeoisie are still opposed to this "reform", that does not prevent our "*neo-Marxism*" from being the best and most advanced expression of the overall specifically political interests of the bourgeois class *as a whole*. The theorists of our petty bourgeoisie see farther and have a better judgement than the men of business who stand at the head of the big bourgeoisie. It is therefore clear that it is the theorists of our petty bourgeoisie to whom will belong the leading role in the emancipatory movement of our "*middle*" class. We shall not be in the least surprised if some of our "critics" *will, in this sense, go a very long way and, for instance, will assume leadership of our liberals*.

A fair number of years ago, we voiced in our journal *Sotsial-Demokrat*²⁹⁹ the thought that the Narodist theory had completely outlived its time and that our bourgeois intelligentsia, after parting with Narodism, stood in need of a *Europeanised* version of their views.*** Today that Europeanisation has, in the main, taken place, but in a form we did not expect. When we spoke of its necessity, we did not think it would take place under the banner of even a "*revised*" *Marxism*. Live and learn, as the saying goes.

Now that we know, not only Mr. P. Struve's errors but also their *raison d'être*; now that we have understood him, not only

* See Preface to the second German edition of Volume I of *Capital*, p. XIX.²⁹⁸

** The psychology of Marx's West European "critics" differs from that of his Russian "critics" only in the measure of the Western bourgeoisie's seniority to our bourgeoisie. However, there is no essential difference here, neither can there be one. It is the same tune, though somewhat in another key.

*** See our review of the booklet *Sotsial-Demokrat* (Geneva, 1890).

from the angle of his muddled concepts but also of his historical mission—we can part with him and wish him all prosperity. Awaiting us is another task. We have seen, in particular, the groundlessness of this “criticism” of Marx’s theory of social development, as invented by Mr. P. Struve. In particular, we have seen the failure of his attempt to show the impossibility of “leaps” in the area of thought and of life. We must now show how the founders of scientific socialism understood those “leaps” which are called *social revolutions*, and how they saw the future *social revolution of the proletariat*. We shall do that in our next article, which will be the beginning of the *second* part of our *Critique of Our Critics*.

THE MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

Lecture One

(March 8, 1901)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

When an historian—of course one who is not entirely lacking in the gift of generalisation—brings the past and present of the human race into his mental purview, a thrilling and majestic spectacle unfolds itself before his eyes. Indeed, you are no doubt well aware that, as present-day science surmises, man has existed in the world since the most distant Quaternary period, i.e., at least for already two hundred thousand years. But if we lay these calculations aside—they are always conjectural—and if we assume, as was done in the good old days, that man appeared in the world some four thousand years before the Christian era, what we shall get is about two hundred generations that have succeeded one another, only to fall like leaves in the forest at the approach of autumn. Each of these generations, moreover, every individual forming part of each generation has engaged in the pursuit of his own aims: each has struggled for his own existence or for that of his kith and kin; nevertheless, there has existed an integral movement, something we call the *history of the human race*.

If we recall the condition our distant ancestors lived in, if we picture to ourselves, for instance, the existence of those who found shelter in so-called pile dwellings, and if we compare that mode of life with that, say, of the present-day Swiss, we shall see a vast difference. That is because, in the life of the human race, there has been, not just movement but also what we call *progress*. The distance separating man from his more or less anthropoid forebears has increased, and man's power over Nature has grown. It is therefore perfectly natural—I shall say even more—inevitable, for the question to arise: what were the causes of that movement and that progress?

That question, ladies and gentlemen, is the great question of the causes of mankind's historical advance and progress; it is a question that forms the subject of what used to be called the philosophy of history, and, as I see it, should rather be designated the understanding of history considered as a science, i.e., *history*.

that does not remain content with the study of how phenomena took place, but wishes to learn why they took place in a definite way, and no other.

Like any other subject, the philosophy of history has had its own history. I thereby want to say that, in different periods, those who have made a study of the *causes* of the historical advance have given different replies to this great question. *Every epoch has had its own philosophy of history.*

You may very well point out to me that in one and the same period of history, there have often existed *several* schools, not only a single school, of the philosophy of history. I am in agreement with that but, at the same time, I will ask you to note that the various schools of philosophy that have arisen in a given period of history have always shared something in common, something that enables us to regard them as various species of one and the same genus. We can also, of course, find vestiges of the past in them. We can, therefore, simplify the question under review, by saying that *every historical period has its own philosophy of history.*

We shall deal with some of these in our talks. I will begin with *theological philosophy*, in other words, with the *theological understanding of history.*

What is meant by the theological philosophy, or theological understanding of history? It is the most primitive understanding: it is closely linked with the first efforts made by human thought to gain some understanding of the surrounding world.

Indeed, the simplest idea a man can form of Nature is by seeing in the latter, not phenomena that depend on one another and are governed by immutable laws but events brought about by the operation of one or several wills, like his own will. The French philosopher Guyot tells, in one of his books, of hearing a child call the Moon *horrid* because it did not wish to show itself in the sky. The child considered the Moon *animate*; like that child, primitive man considered all Nature animate. *Animism* was the first phase in the development of religious thought: science's first step was the elimination of the animistic explanation of natural phenomena, and gaining an understanding of them as phenomena subordinate to definite laws. Whilst the child thinks that the Moon refuses to show itself because it is horrid, the natural scientist explains to us the sum of the natural conditions which, at any given moment, help us to see, or prevent us from seeing, any celestial body.

But whilst science has made comparatively rapid strides in the study and understanding of *Nature*, it has developed far more slowly in the study of *human* society and its history. The animistic explanation of historical phenomena was found admissible

even when the animistic explanation of natural phenomena already seemed merely ridiculous. It was considered quite possible in a comparatively civilised milieu, and often even in a highly civilised one, to explain mankind's historical advance as a manifestation of the will of one or several divinities; it is this explanation of the historical process as coming from some divine will that we call the *theological understanding of history*.

To provide you with two examples of this kind of understanding, I shall dwell on the historical philosophy of two celebrated men: St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (the present-day Algiers), and Bossuet, bishop of the city of Meaux (in France).

St. Augustine (354-430) thought that historical events depended on Divine Providence; moreover, he was convinced that no other yardstick could be used in respect of them. "Consider," he wrote, "that this God, unique and omnipotent, Author and Creator of all souls and all bodies. ... Who has made of man a reasonable animal composed of body and soul ... this God, the principle of all rule, all duty and all order; Who has given everything number, weight and measure; from Whom derives all works of Nature of all kinds and price ... I ask whether it can be believed that this God could suffer the empires of the world, their domination and their servitude to remain estranged from the laws of His Providence" (*Cité de Dieu*, trad. d'Emile Saisset, livre V, chap. XI, pp. 292-93).

In none of his explanations of historical events did St. Augustine depart from this overall viewpoint.

When it was a matter of how the grandeur of the Romans should be explained, the Bishop of Hippo described in minute detail how that grandeur was needed by Divine Providence. "After the kingdoms of the East had flourished in the world for a long sequence of years," he wrote, "God wished that the Western Empire, which was the last in the order of time, should become the first of all in grandeur and extent; and as He had the design of making use of that empire to chastise a large number of nations, he entrusted that to men who yearned for adulatory praise and honour but saw such glory in that of their country and were always prepared to sacrifice themselves for its well-being, thus overcoming their cupidity and their other vices for the sake of that single vice—a love of glory. For there is no blinking the fact that love of glory is a vice", etc. (t. I, p. 301).

When it was a matter of the efflorescence of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, there appeared on the scene the will of God, which solved and explained everything with the greatest ease. "The good God," St. Augustine wrote, "wishing to prevent those who adore him ... from persuading themselves that it is impossible to win kingdoms and grandeur on Earth without the

all-powerful favour of demons, wished to shed the lustre of His favour on the Emperor Constantine, who, far from resorting to false gods, worshipped the only true God, who showered upon him more blessings than anyone else could have dared to wish for" (t. I, pp. 328-29).

When, finally, it was a matter of establishing why one war lasted longer than another, St. Augustine would say that such was the wish of God: "In just the same way that it depends on God to afflict or comfort men according to the counsels of His Justice and His Mercy, it is also He who rules the length of wars, and shortens or prolongs them at His pleasure" (t. I, p. 323).

St. Augustine, it will be seen, was invariably faithful to his fundamental principle. Regrettably, fidelity to a definite principle is not enough for a correct explanation of historical events to be found. It is necessary, first and foremost, for a *correct* fundamental principle *to be chosen*; moreover, it is incumbent on the historian who would remain faithful to his fundamental principle to make a thorough study of all the facts preceding and accompanying the phenomenon he is out to explain. A fundamental principle can and should serve only as a guideline in an analysis of historical reality.

In both these respects, the theory of St. Augustine cannot stand up to scrutiny. It provides no method for an analysis of historical reality. As for its fundamental principle I would ask you to note the following: St. Augustine spoke with such conviction and in such detail of what he called the laws of Providence that one involuntarily asks oneself, while reading him, whether God revealed all His innermost secrets to him. It is with the same conviction and with the same fidelity to his "fundamental principle" that the same author tells us in the same book that the *ways of the Lord are inscrutable*. But if that is so, why tackle the thankless and fruitless task of studying those "ways"? Why should reference be made to these "inscrutable ways" as an explanation of the events of human life? The contradiction is obvious, and, that being so, even men of ardent and unshakeable faith have been obliged to reject the theological interpretation of history if only they wish to take at least some account of logic, and if they do not wish to assert that the *inscrutable*, i.e., the *inexplicable and the incomprehensible, explains everything and makes everything comprehensible*.

Let us now go over to Bossuet (1627-1704). Like St. Augustine, Bossuet took up the theological viewpoint in the interpretation of history. He was convinced that the historical destinies of peoples or, as he put it, *les révolutions des empires*, were guided by Providence. "These empires," he wrote in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, "were mostly a necessary link with the history of the

Chosen People. God made use of the Assyrians and the Babylonians to chastise that people; the Persians to reestablish it; Alexander and his first successors to protect it; Antiochus the Illustrious and his successors to test it; the Romans to maintain its liberty against the kings of Syria, who were out to destroy it. The Jews existed until Jesus Christ, under the might of the same Romans. But when they denied and crucified Him, the same Romans unwittingly assisted in the Divine Vengeance, and exterminated that ungrateful people," etc. (*Discours*, éd. Garniers frères, p. 334). In a word, all the nations and all the great states which succeeded one another on the historical scene promoted, in various ways, one and the same aim—the *advancement of the Christian religion and the glorification of God*.

On the basis of the Revelation of the Holy Ghost to St. John, a revelation the latter expounded in the Apocalypse, Bossuet showed his own disciple how the secret judgement of God fell on the Roman Empire and Rome itself. Bossuet spoke of all this—he, too!—as though the ways of the Lord had ceased being *inscrutable* and—what is most noteworthy—the spectacle of the historical process evoked in him nothing but *thoughts of the vanity of human affairs*. "Thus," he says, "when you see sweeping past your eyes instantaneously—I do not say kings and emperors, but all those grand empires which made all the universe tremble; when you see the Assyrians, ancient and new, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans present themselves before you in succession and fall, so to say, one after the other; that horrifying downfall makes you feel that there is nothing secure among men and that inconstancy and unrest are the lot of human affairs" (*Discours*, p. 339).

This *pessimism* is a most distinctive feature of Bossuet's philosophy of history. Careful thought will make one acknowledge that this feature is a correct reflection of the essence of Christianity. Indeed, Christianity holds out to believers the promise of consolation, a great deal of consolation! But in what way does it console? It does so by distracting believers from everything earthly, by convincing them that everything on earth is vanity, and that human happiness is only possible after death. I would ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to remember this feature, which will provide us, in my further exposition, with material for comparisons.

It was another distinctive feature of Bossuet's philosophy of history that, unlike St. Augustine, he did not confine himself, in his interpretation of historical events, to references to the will of God; he directed his attention to what he called the *specific causes of the movement of empires*.

"For," he wrote, "the same God who has given the concatenation of the Universe, Who, omnipotent by Himself, has wished

for the establishment of order so that the parts of so vast a whole should depend on one another—that same God has also desired that the course of human affairs should have its sequence and proportions: what I want to say is that men and nations have possessed qualities in proportion to the grandeur destined for them—with reservation regarding certain extraordinary events in which God wished that his will should appear all alone—no great change has taken place which has not had its causes in preceding centuries. And since, in all affairs, there is something which has prepared them, something that determines that they should be undertaken, and makes them succeed, it is the true purpose of the science of history to ascertain for each particular period the secret causes that have prepared great changes, and the important conjunctures that have brought them about” (*Discours*, pp. 339-40).

Thus, according to Bossuet, there take place in history events in which only the finger of God shows itself, in other words, events in which God acts *directly*. Such events are, so to say, *historical miracles*. In most cases, however, with the ordinary tenor of things, the changes taking place in any given period are brought about by causes engendered by preceding periods. *The task of genuine science consists in a study of those causes, which contain nothing supernatural, since they hinge only on the nature of men and nations.*

Consequently, in his theological understanding of history, Bossuet devoted considerable space to a *natural explanation of historical events*. True, that natural explanation was closely connected with the *theological idea*, since God, after all, invariably endowed men and nations with qualities in proportion to the grandeur destined for them. But once they had been granted, such qualities manifested themselves independently; inasmuch as they manifest themselves, *we are not only entitled* but, as Bossuet categorically stated, *in duty bound to search for a natural explanation of history.*

Bossuet's philosophy of history has a great advantage over that of St. Augustine in that it insists on the need to study the specific causes of events. That advantage, however, is in fact nothing but an acknowledgement—of course, unconscious and involuntary—of the *impotence* and *barrenness* of the theological concept proper, i.e., of a method that consists in an *explanation of phenomena by the operation of one or several supernatural forces.*

This recognition was made skilful use of in the next century by the opponents of theology. The most dangerous of these was *Voltaire, the patriarch of Fernay*, who made the following caustic remarks in his celebrated *Essai sur les mœurs des Nations*: “Nothing is more worthy of our curiosity than the manner in which God has wished the church to establish itself, in making secondary causes fall in with His eternal decrees. Let us respectfully leave what is

divine to those entrusted with it, and address ourselves exclusively to the historical" (*Essai*, éd. Beychot, t. I, p. 346).

Thus, the theological understanding of history is laid aside. Voltaire addresses himself exclusively to historical events, which he tries to explain by their secondary, i.e., *natural* causes. But what does science consist in if not in a natural explanation of phenomena? Voltaire's philosophy of history is an *essay in the scientific interpretation of history*.

Let us consider this essay in some greater detail. For instance, let us see *what causes, according to Voltaire, led to the fall of the Roman Empire*.

The decay of Rome proceeded slowly and over a long period, but among the disasters that led to the fall of that vast empire, Voltaire emphasised the following two: 1) *the barbarians*; and 2) *religious dissension*.

The Roman Empire was destroyed by the barbarians. "But why," Voltaire asks, "were they not exterminated by the Romans in the way Marius exterminated the Cimbri?³⁰⁰ It was because there was no Marius to be found and because morals had changed. The Roman Empire now had more monks than soldiers, and those monks travelled in flocks from city to city with the purpose of supporting or destroying the idea of the consubstantiality of the Word..." (*ibid.*, t. I, p. 377).

"The descendants of the Scipios had become controversialists ... personal esteem had been shifted from the Hortensiuses and the Ciceros to the Cyrils, the Gregories and the Ambroses; all was lost, and if one should be astonished by anything it is that the Roman Empire lasted for some time more" (*ibid.*, t. I, p. 377).

Here you can clearly see what, according to Voltaire, was the main cause of the fall of Rome. *That cause was the triumph of Christianity*. Voltaire expressed that with his usual caustic irony: "Christianity opened the way to Heaven, but it lost the Empire" (*ibid.*, t. I, p. 377). Was he right? Or perhaps he was in error? That is something which does not interest us at present. What is important to us is to appreciate Voltaire's historical views. We shall subject them to critical analysis later.

Thus we see that, according to Voltaire, the Roman Empire fell because of Christianity. But mankind, of course, may ask: *why was it that Christianity triumphed in Rome?*

In Voltaire's opinion, it was Constantine who was mainly instrumental in bringing about the triumph of Christianity; in keeping with the truth of history, Voltaire depicted him as an evil and hypocritical ruler. But is it possible for any one man, even if he is an emperor, most evil, and superstitious, to bring about the triumph of any religion? Voltaire thought it was possible; at the time, he was not alone in thinking so. It was what all

the philosophers thought at the time. As an example, I shall quote the opinion of another writer regarding the origin of the Jewish people and Christianity.

While the *theological understanding* of history consists in attributing historical evolution to the will or acts—direct or indirect—of one or several supernatural forces, the *idealist understanding* consists in attributing that same historical evolution to the evolution of morals and ideas, or, as was said in the eighteenth century, of *opinion*.

"By opinion," Suard wrote, "I mean the outcome of the mass of truths and errors spread in a nation, an outcome that determines its judgements of esteem or contempt, love or hate, and shapes its propensities and customs, its vices and virtues—in a word, its morals" (Suard, *Mélanges de littérature*, t. III, p. 400).

If opinions rule the world, it is obvious that they are the fundamental and most profound cause of the historical process, and there is no reason to be surprised if an historian refers to opinions as a force ultimately conditioning the events in any period of history.

If opinions account for historical events *in general*, it is quite natural to search in religious ideas (e.g., in Christianity) for the most fundamental cause of the prosperity or decline of any empire (the Roman, for example). Consequently, Voltaire remained faithful to the philosophy of history of his time in saying that Christianity brought about the downfall of the Roman Empire.

But among the eighteenth-century philosophers there were several known as materialists, for example, *Holbach*, author of the celebrated *Système de la Nature*, and *Helvetius*, who wrote the no less celebrated book *De l'Esprit*. It would be quite natural to suppose that these philosophers, at least, did not approve of the *idealist explanation of history*.

That supposition, however, is erroneous, no matter how natural it may seem. Materialists in their *understanding of Nature*, *Holbach* and *Helvetius* were *idealists* in the realm of *history*. Like all eighteenth-century philosophers, like the whole "pack of encyclopedists" (*séquelle des encyclopédistes*), the materialists of the time thought that the world was ruled by opinions, and that the evolution of ideas was the ultimate explanation of all historical evolution.

"Ignorance, error, prejudice, lack of experience, reflection and prevision—these are the true sources of moral evil. Men prejudice themselves and injure their associates (*associés*) only because they have no idea of their true interests..." (*Système social*, t. II, chap. I, p. 5).

Elsewhere, in the same book we read the following: "History proves to us that, in the matter of government, nations have

always been playthings of their ignorance, imprudence, credulity, their panicky fears, and, above all of passions that have gained an ascendancy over the multitude. Like sick people who endlessly toss about on their beds, unable to find a comfortable posture, peoples have often changed the forms of their governments, but they have never had the power or the capacity to reform the root and get at the true source of their evils; they have ceaselessly seethed with blind passions" (ibid., t. II, p. 27).

These quotations show us that, in the opinion of the materialist Holbach, ignorance was the cause of moral and political calamities. If peoples are evil, it is because of their ignorance; if their governments are absurd, it is because they have not been able to discover the true principles of social and political organisation; if revolutions carried out by peoples have failed to eradicate moral and social evil, it is because those peoples did not possess enough knowledge. But what is ignorance? What is error? What is prejudice? Ignorance, error and prejudice are merely mistaken opinions. If ignorance, error and prejudice have prevented people from discovering the true foundation of political and social organisation, it is clear that the world has been ruled by *false opinions*. Consequently, Holbach adhered, in this question, to the same views as most eighteenth-century philosophers did.

As for Helvetius, I shall only quote for you his opinion regarding the feudal system.

In a letter to Saurin on Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois*, he wrote the following: "But what the devil does he want to teach us in his *Traité des Fiefs*? Is that a matter that a wise and reasonable mind should seek to unravel? What legislation could result from this barbarous chaos of laws established by force, made respectable by ignorance and always opposed to a good order of things?" (*Œuvres*, t. III, p. 314).

Elsewhere he wrote: "Montesquieu is too much of a feudalist, and feudal government is the height of absurdity" (*Œuvres*, t. III, p. 314).

Thus, Helvetius found that feudalism, i.e., an entire system of social and political institutions, was the height of absurdity and consequently owed its origins to *ignorance* or, in other words, to *erroneous opinions*. It thus followed that, whether for good or for evil, opinions always ruled the world.

I have already said that what is important for us is not a criticism of this theory, but a sound knowledge of it so as to ascertain its essence. Now that we have gained some knowledge of it, it is not only permissible but even necessary to subject it to analysis.

The question is whether this theory is right or wrong.

Is it true that people who are unaware of their own interests are unable to defend them reasonably? *That is indisputably true.*

Is it true that ignorance has brought mankind much evil and that a social and political system based on the subordination and exploitation of man by man, such as feudalism was, could have existed only in times of ignorance and deeply ingrained prejudices?

Yes, that is quite true, and I cannot imagine how so patent a truth can be disputed.

In short, is it true or untrue that opinion in the meaning established by Suard exerts a great influence on human behaviour?

Those with an insight into people will say that this is also undoubtable and indisputable.

Does it thus seem to emerge that the *idealistic understanding of history* is grounded in truth, so that we can raise no objections to it?

To that, I shall reply both yes and no. Here is what I mean by that.

The idealistic understanding of history is correct in the sense that it contains part of the truth. *Indeed, there is part of the truth in it.* Opinions do exert a very considerable influence on people. Consequently, we are entitled to say that opinions rule the world. *But we also have the full right to ask ourselves: are not opinions, which rule the world, controlled, in their turn, by something else?*

In other words, we can and should ask ourselves whether human opinions and sentiments depend simply on chance. Raising that question means immediately answering it in the negative, for human opinions and sentiments do not in the least depend on chance. Their inception, like their development, is subordinate to laws that we can and should study. As soon as you accept that assumption—and how can one fail to accept it?—you will be forced to acknowledge that if opinions govern the world then they do not do so as a supreme ruler does, for they are, in their turn, governed by a something; consequently he who refers to opinions is far from telling us of the fundamental and most deep-lying cause of the historical process.

Consequently, the idealistic understanding of history contains a portion of the truth. However, it does not yet contain all the truth.

To know the entire truth, we must continue our research from the very point at which the idealistic understanding of history has discontinued it. We must try to establish with precision the *causes of the inception and development of opinions in people living in society.*

To make that task easier, let us conduct our study in a methodical fashion, and first of all see whether opinions, i.e., according to Suard, the sum of the truths and errors widespread among people, are innate in them, born together with them, to disappear only with them. That means asking ourselves *whether inborn ideas exist.*

There was a time when people were firmly convinced that ideas were inborn, at least in part. In making that assumption, they at the same time found it possible to believe that such ideas comprise a definite stock common to all mankind and invariable in all times and climes.

This view, once widespread, was triumphantly disproved by the outstanding English philosopher *John Locke* (1632-1704). In his celebrated *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke proved that man's mind contains no inborn ideas, principles or notions. Ideas and principles arise *from human experience*, this being equally true in respect of both speculative principles and practical principles, or those of *morality*. The latter principles change with time and place. When people *condemn* some action, they do so because it is *detrimental* to them; when they *praise* an action, that means they consider it *useful*.

Consequently, it is interest (not personal but social interest) which determines men's judgements in the realm of social life.

Such was Locke's theory which was fervently upheld by all French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Consequently we have grounds to accept this theory as a point of departure in our criticism of their understanding of history.

Men's minds contain no inborn ideas. It is experience that determines *speculative ideas*, while social interest determines "*practical*" ideas. Let us accept this proposition and see what conclusions emerge from it.

Lecture Two

(March 15, 1901)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

If, according to the Latin proverb, repetition is the mother of learning, then summarising is the latter's housekeeper. A summary takes stock of what has been acquired, and appraises it. That is why I shall begin my second lecture with a summary of the first one.

Last time I said that the theological understanding of history consists in attributing the historical process and the progress of the human race to the operation of one or several supernatural forces, to the will of one or several gods.

Then I proceeded to a consideration of the philosophy of history held by *St. Augustine* and *Bossuet*, and showed that the latter's philosophy of history had the great advantage over *St. Augustine's* in that it rejected any explanation of the historical process as the immediate action of God, and insisted on the necessity of seeking the *specific* causes of the historical events, in other words, their *natural causes*.

A search after the natural causes of events means a rejection of the *theological* viewpoint and the adoption of the *scientific* view, since the latter consists in an explanation of phenomena through their natural causes, in a complete abstraction from the slightest influence of supernatural forces.

I quoted from *Voltaire*, who said that he left the divine to those who were entrusted with such matters; he himself was interested only in *historical*, i.e., natural, causes. *Voltaire's* viewpoint, like that of all French eighteenth-century philosophers, was a scientific one. However, since science in its turn goes through evolution and development, we had to analyse in some greater detail the viewpoint adhered to by *Voltaire*. We found that it was an *idealistic* one, i.e., that *Voltaire*, like all eighteenth-century philosophers, even those who, like *Holbach* and *Helvetius*, were materialists in their understanding of Nature, ascribed the historical process to the *evolution of ideas* or, as was said at the time, of *opinions*.

When I went over to a criticism of this understanding of history, I said that this was *relatively true*, since actual *opinions* exert a considerable influence on *human behaviour*. I then added that the emergence and evolution of opinions are, in their turn, subordinate to certain laws, so that consequently the historian cannot regard opinions as the basic and most deep-lying cause of the historical process. He who would make a deeper study of that process should go further and study those causes which, in each particular historical period, bring about the domination of certain ideas, and no others.

Concluding my preceding lecture, I told you in what direction that kind of study proceeded. It did so in a direction pointed out by *John Locke*: 1) no inborn ideas exist, 2) ideas arise from experience, and 3) as for *practical* ideas, it is interest (social, not personal) that leads to some actions being qualified as *good*, and others as *bad*.

That is what we already know. Let us now try to learn something new.

The eighteenth century was marked off from the nineteenth by an historic event—the *French Revolution*, which like a hurricane swept across France, destroying the *old order* and sweeping away all its *remnants*. It exerted a profound influence on economic, social, political and intellectual life, not only in France but in all Europe. It could not but have an influence on the philosophy of history as well.

What kind of influence was it?

The most direct outcome of the revolution was a sense of *tremendous fatigue*. The vast efforts made by people at the time brought about an *imperative need of repose*. Also to be seen a part from

that feeling of fatigue—inevitable after any great expenditure of effort—was a *certain scepticism*. In the eighteenth century there was a firm belief in the triumph of *reason*. Reason will always triumph in the end, said Voltaire. This belief was smashed by the revolutionary events. So many unexpected happenings had taken place; so much that had seemed quite impossible and absolutely opposed to reason had emerged triumphant, and so many wise calculations and previsions had been upset by the brutal logic of the facts that people began to tell themselves that *reason would probably never triumph*. In this respect, we have valuable evidence provided by a clever woman who was gifted with a keen eye for the happenings about her. "...Most men, terrified by the dreadful vicissitudes of which the political events provided an example," said Mme. de Staël-Holstein, "have lost all interest in perfecting themselves and are too much struck by the power of chance to believe in the ascendancy of the intellectual faculties" (*De la Littérature...*, Paris, l'an VIII, préface, p. XVIII).

Consequently, people were intimidated by the power of chance. But what is chance, and what is the significance of chance happenings in the life of society? These questions contain material for philosophical discussion. But without entering into such a discussion, we can say that people only too often *ascribe to chance anything whose cause remains unknown to them*. That is why, whenever the element of chance oppresses them too much and too long with its power, they ultimately try to find explanations for phenomena which they have hitherto considered fortuitous, and to discover their causes. It is this that we see in the field of historical science in the *early nineteenth century*.

Saint-Simon, one of the most encyclopedic and least methodical minds of the first half of this century, tried to create the foundations of *social science*. The latter—the *science of human society*, social physics as he sometimes calls it—can and should, in his opinion, become just as precise a science as the *natural sciences*. We must study the facts pertaining to mankind's past so as to discover the laws of its *progress*. *It is only when we understand the past that we shall be able to foresee the future*. To understand and explain the past, Saint-Simon made a study, in the main, of the history of Western Europe after the downfall of the Roman Empire.

He saw in that history a struggle waged by the *industrialists* (or the third estate, as they were called in the previous century) against the *aristocracy*. The industrialists entered into an alliance with the monarchy, their support for the kings enabling the latter to assume the political power previously in the hands of the feudal lords. In exchange for these services, the monarchy gave them its support, with the aid of which they were able to win a number of

important victories over their enemies. Thanks to their hard work and organisation, the industrialists gradually achieved an impressive social power, considerably greater than that of the aristocracy. As Saint-Simon saw it, the French Revolution was merely an episode in the great century-old struggle between the *industrialists and the nobility*. All his practical proposals consisted in projects of measures which he thought should be taken to supplement and consolidate the industrialists' victory and the defeat of the nobility. However, the struggle between the industrialists and the nobility was a struggle of *two opposing interests*. If, as Saint-Simon put it, that struggle filled the entire history of Western Europe since the fifteenth century, we can say that a struggle between major social interests conditioned the historical process during that period. Consequently we have moved very far from the eighteenth-century philosophy of history: it is not opinions but social interests, or rather the interests of the major components of society, the interests of classes, and the social struggle caused by the oppositeness of those interests that rule the world and determine the course of history.

Saint-Simon's historical views exerted a decisive influence on one of the most outstanding French historians—*Augustin Thierry*. The latter created a revolution in French historical science, so it will be very useful for us to analyse his views.

You will remember, I hope, the extract from Holbach which I quoted, regarding the history of the Jewish people. According to Holbach, that history was the creation of one man—*Moses*, who shaped the character of the Jews and gave them their *social and political structure*, as well as their *religion*. Each nation, Holbach said in this connection, has its own Moses. The eighteenth-century philosophy of history knew only personalities, only *great men*; *the masses, the people as such*, hardly existed at all. In this respect, Augustin Thierry's philosophy of history was the direct opposite of the eighteenth-century philosophy of history. "It is a most singular thing," he wrote in one of his *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*, "that the historians have stubbornly refused to attribute any spontaneity, any ideas, to the masses of people. When an entire people emigrate to found a new home, that is—so the annalists and poets tell us—because some hero, wishing to add lustre to his name, has taken it into his head to set up an empire; when new customs have become established, it is because some legislator has devised and imposed them; when a city has been established, it is because some prince has brought it into being: the people and the citizens are always the screen for one man's thinking."*

* *Dix ans d'études historiques*, La Haye, 1885, p. 348.

The revolution had been carried out by the *masses of the people*; that revolution, the memory of which was still so fresh in people's minds during the Restoration, precluded the historical process being regarded as the affair of more or less wise and more or less virtuous personalities. Instead of engaging in a study of the acts and gestures of *great men*, the historians now wished for a *history of the peoples*.

That outcome was of the utmost importance, and is worth while remembering.

But let us go further. History is created by the masses. Well and good. But why do they create it? In other words: *when the masses go into action, what is the purpose of that action?* That purpose is the assurance of their interests, Augustin Thierry tells us. "Do you wish," he asked, "to learn for sure who has created a given institution, who has thought up a given social enterprise? For that, find out who actually stood in need of that institution and that enterprise; it was in their minds that the first thought of them had to appear; it was from them that the will to act in that direction had to emerge; it was to them that the main role in their implementation belonged. *Is fecit cui prodest*: this axiom is equally applicable both to history and to justice." (*Dix ans*, p. 348.)

Consequently the masses act in their own interests; interest is the source, the prime mover of any social creativity. Thus it is easy to understand that, when some institution becomes hostile to the interests of the masses, the latter begin a struggle against it, and since an institution that is detrimental to the *masses* of the people is often useful to the privileged class, the struggle against that institution becomes a struggle against that privileged class. *The struggle of classes and opposing interests* plays an important part in Augustin Thierry's philosophy of history. Thus the history of England was full of that struggle, beginning with the Norman Conquest down to the revolution that overthrew the Stuart dynasty. In the English revolution of the seventeenth century, two social classes were locked in struggle: the conquerors—the nobility, and the conquered—the masses of the people, including the bourgeoisie.

"Any man whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror," says our historian, "left his castle to join the royalist camp to take up a command in keeping with his rank. The inhabitants of cities ... flocked to the opposite camp. One could say that the rallying calls of the two armies were: on one side, *idleness and power*, on the other, *work and liberty*. All idlers, whatever their origin, those whose only aim in life was the pursuit of enjoyment without any effort, enrolled in the royalist forces to defend interests that coincided with their own; whilst the families of the

caste of the ancient conquerors who had now gone into industry united with the party of the Commons.*

It was not only in the social and political area that this *struggle between two classes* determined the course of history. Its influence was also to be seen in the area of *ideas*. The religious beliefs held by the English in the seventeenth century were, in Thierry's opinion, conditioned by their social standing. "It was for positive interests that the war was waged by both sides. All the rest was merely extraneous or a pretext. Most of those who took up the cause of the subjects were Presbyterians, i.e., wanted no yoke, even in religion. Those who supported the opposite cause were episcopalians or papists: even in the field of religion they were out to exercise power and impose taxes."**

You will see that we have departed still farther from the eighteenth-century philosophy of history. In that century, it was asserted that opinions rule the world. Even in the field of religion, opinions were now determined and conditioned by the class struggle.

And note that the historian I have just spoken of was not alone in thinking so. His philosophy of history was shared by all outstanding historians of the Restoration period. *Mignet*, who was Augustin Thierry's contemporary, held that opinion too. In his outstanding work *De la féodalité*, he described social evolution in the following words: "The dominant interests determine the course of the social movement. That movement works for its aim despite all obstacles standing in its way, and ceases when that aim has been achieved, yielding place to another, which is at first quite imperceptible, making itself felt only when it has acquired might. Such was the course followed by the feudal system. Society needed that system before it was actually established—that was its first period; then it existed in fact after ceasing from being necessary—that was the second period. This led to it ceasing from being a fact."*** Here again we are very far removed from the eighteenth-century philosophy of history. Helvetius rebuked Montesquieu for too close a study of feudal laws. To Helvetius, the feudal system was the height of absurdity and as such did not deserve such careful study. Mignet, on the contrary, thought that there was a time, to wit the Middle Ages, when the feudal system met the needs of society, and was therefore useful to it. He said that it was that usefulness which had brought it into being. Mignet kept reiterating that it is not people that bring things into their wake, but things that bring people into their wake. It was from this point of view that he considered events, in his history of the French Revolution. In his descrip-

* *Dix ans d'études historiques*, p. 91.

** *ibid.*, pp. 91, 92.

*** Mignet, *De la féodalité*, partie I, chap. IX, pp. 77-78.

tion of the Constituent Assembly, he said: "The interests of the aristocratic classes were contrary to those of the national party. That was why the nobility and the upper clergy, who formed the Right in the Assembly, were in constant opposition to it, except of course on certain days of common enthusiasm. These malcontents of the revolution, who were capable neither of preventing it by their sacrifices nor of checking it by their adhesion, came out systematically against all its reforms."*

Thus, political groups are determined by the interests of classes, these interests engendering certain political constitutions. Mignet tells us that the Constitution of 1791 "was the work of the middle class, which was then the strongest because, as is common knowledge, it is the dominant force that always takes over institutions. But when it belongs to one man, that is despotism; when it belongs to several men—that is privilege; when it belongs to all—that is law: law is the consummation of society, just as it is its origin. France finally arrived at it after passing through feudalism, which was an aristocratic institution, and through absolute power, which was a monarchical institution".

Elsewhere in the same book, he wrote the following: "But the monarchy actually succumbed on August 10, the day that marked the insurrection of the crowd against the middle class and against the constitutional throne, just as July 14 had been the day of the insurrection of the middle class against the privileged classes and the absolute power of the crown. August 10 saw the onset of the dictatorial and arbitrary period of the revolution. Since the circumstances were becoming more and more arduous, a vast war broke out which called for an upsurge of energy; and that energy, spontaneous, unorganised because it came from the people, made the domination of the lower class uneasy, oppressive and cruel. The situation then changed completely; it was no longer a question of liberty but of the public salvation; and the period of the Convention following the end of the Constitution of 1791, right up to the moment when the Constitution of Year III established the Directory, was nothing but a lengthy campaign of the Revolution against the political parties and against Europe. It was hardly possible for it to be different."

Like Thierry, Mignet was a convinced representative of the middle class. Since it was a matter of an appraisal of the political activities of that class, he went so far as to laud violent methods. "Right is won only by force," he said.

We find the same trend, the same sympathies and the same viewpoint in *Guizot*. But with him, such trends and sympathies were more sharply expressed and the viewpoint is more clear-cut.

* *Histoire de la révolution française*, t. I, p. 104.

Already in his *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, which came out in 1821, he very clearly formulated his view of what comprises the foundation of the social edifice.

"Most writers, scholars, historians or publicists have tried to explain a given society's condition, and the degree or type of its civilisation by its political institutions. It would be wiser to begin with a study of society itself so as to know and understand its political institutions. Before becoming a cause, institutions are an effect; society creates them before itself beginning to change under their influence; and instead of judging of a people's condition by its forms of government, one should first investigate the people's condition so as to judge what its government should and could have been.... Society, its composition, the way of life of individuals in accordance with their social standing, the relations between various classes of people—in a word *l'état des personnes*—such is undoubtedly the first question to attract the attention of the historian who wishes to know how peoples have lived, and the attention of the publicist who wishes to learn how they have been governed."*

The English Revolution; the French Revolution. The social struggle. Thirty centuries; the debates in the Chamber of Deputies; the constitutions; the reply to a certain rebuke. The epigraph to Guizot's booklet; *it is pleasant*, etc. What did Guizot write in January 1849? His booklet *De la démocratie*. The circumstances were already different. As he himself said: "But now", etc. Armand Carrel. Alexis de Tocqueville: Man's nature; a letter to his father; the social system. Literature.

So after all these quotations, I have, I hope, the right to say that, since the early years of the nineteenth century, the sociologists, the historians and the art critics have all referred us to the social system as the underlying foundation of the phenomena of human society. We know what that *social system* is; Guizot calls it *l'état des personnes*; it is the *property status*. But where has that status come from, on which everything in society hinges? As soon as we have a clear and exact reply to this question, we shall be able to explain the course of the historical process and the causes of mankind's progress. But it is this important question—this question of questions—that the historians have failed to reply to.

Thus we have a contradiction: ideas, sentiments and opinions are *determined* by the social system; the social system is determined by opinions. *A* is the cause of *B*, while *B* is the cause of *A*. In our next lecture, we shall see what way can be found out of this *cul-de-sac*.

* Guizot, *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, 4^e essai, p. 7.

Lecture Three

(March 23, 1901)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In dealing with the evolution of the philosophy of history, I have till now confined myself in the main to France. With the exception of St. Augustine and Holbach, all the writers whose historical views I have set forth to you were French.³⁰¹ We shall now cross the French border and enter German territory.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Germany was a classical land of philosophy. Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and so many other philosophers less important and less celebrated, but no less devoted to the search for the truth, succeeded one another in delving into questions of philosophy, those difficult questions, already so old yet always new. Among these major questions the philosophy of history held a leading place. Consequently, it will not be quite useless for you to see how the German philosophers replied to the question of the causes of the historical process and of mankind's progress.

Since we lack the necessary time for a detailed analysis of the philosophy of history advanced by each of these philosophers, we shall have to confine ourselves to an acquaintance with the views of two of the greatest among them—Schelling and Hegel. Even so, we shall deal only superficially with these philosophers' historical views. Thus, for instance, in respect of Schelling I shall touch only upon his concept of freedom.

Historical evolution is a chain of phenomena that obey definite laws. Phenomena that obey definite laws are *necessary* ones.

Rain is an instance. It is a law-governed phenomenon, which means that, given certain conditions, drops of water are certain to fall on the earth. That is clearly understandable in respect of drops of water which possess neither consciousness nor will. In historical phenomena, however, what operates is people, not inanimate objects; human beings are endowed with consciousness and will. That is why there is every ground to pose the question as follows: is not the concept of *human freedom* precluded by the concept of necessity, outside of which there can be no *scientific* cognition either in history or in natural science? Formulated otherwise the question will read as follows: *can men's freedom of action be reconciled with historical necessity?*

At first glance, it may seem impossible, and that necessity precludes freedom, and vice versa. But it will seem so only to one who glances superficially at things, *without delving* beyond the outer shell of phenomena. In reality, however, that howling contradiction—the seeming antinomy between freedom and

necessity—is non-existent. Far from precluding necessity, freedom is its premise and foundation. It was this proposition that Schelling tried to prove in one of the chapters of his book, under the title of *A System of Transcendental Idealism*.

In his opinion, freedom is impossible without necessity.

If, in my actions, I must take account only of the *freedom* of others, I am unable to *foresee the consequences of my own actions*, since my most precise calculations can be upset at any moment by the freedom of others, which is why my actions can lead up to results quite different from what I expected. Consequently, I would enjoy no freedom and my life would be subject to the play of chance. I can be sure of the outcome of my actions only if I can foresee those of my fellow-men; to be able to do that, those actions must obey certain laws, i.e., must be conditioned by something, must be *necessary*. The necessity of the actions of others is thus the primary condition for the freedom of my own actions. On the other hand, acting in accordance with *necessity*, people can at the same time preserve their freedom of action in full. What is a *necessary* action? It is one which a particular individual cannot but take in definite conditions. But whence the impossibility of not taking that action? That is conditioned by that man's *nature*, which has been fashioned by his heredity and his previous development. His nature is such that he cannot but act in a certain way in the given conditions. That is clear, is it not? Add to that the fact that the particular individual's nature is such that he cannot but feel definite wishes, and you will reconcile the concept of *freedom* with that of *necessity*. I am *free* when I can act *as I wish to*, but my free action is at the same time a necessary one because my wish is conditioned by my nature and the given circumstances. Consequently, necessity does not preclude freedom; necessity is that selfsame freedom, only seen in another aspect, from a different point of view.

After drawing your attention to Schelling's reply to the great question of necessity and freedom, I shall now go over to his colleague and rival—Hegel.

Like Schelling's, Hegel's philosophy was an *idealistic* one. In his opinion, the *Spirit*, or the *Idea*, forms the essence and, as it were, the soul of everything that exists. Matter itself is merely a manifestation of the Spirit, or Idea. Is that possible? Is Matter indeed merely a manifestation of the Spirit? This is a question of vast importance from the philosophical point of view, but there is no need for us to deal with it here. What we must now do is to consider the historical views that arose in Hegel's system on this idealistic foundation.

According to this great thinker's views, *history is nothing but*

a development, in terms of time, of the Universal Spirit. The philosophy of history is history in the light of Reason; it takes the facts as they are, the only idea it introduces into them being that *Reason rules the world*. That no doubt reminds you of French philosophy in the eighteenth century, which held that the world was ruled by opinions or Reason. Hegel, however, understood this idea in his own way. In his lectures on the philosophy of history, he said that Anaxagoras was the first to recognise, in terms of philosophy, that Reason rules the world, understanding by that, not an aware-of-itself Reason, not the mind as such, but *general laws*. The movement of the planetary system follows immutable laws, those laws comprising its Reason, but neither the Sun nor the planets that move in accordance with those laws are aware of that. Consequently, the Reason that directs the historical process is, according to Hegel, an *unconscious one, nothing but a totality of laws that serves the movement of history*. As for human thought and opinions, which the French eighteenth-century philosophers regarded as the prime mover in the movement of history, Hegel in most cases thought them conditioned by the way of life, or, in other words, by the *social system*. It was to the latter that he addressed himself in seeking an explanation of the historical process. Thus, in his philosophy of history, he says that the downfall of Sparta was brought about by the extreme inequality of property. He also said that, as a political organisation, the State owed its origin to inequality in wealth and to the struggle of the poor against the rich. But that was not all. The origin of the family, according to Hegel, was closely linked to the economic evolution of primitive peoples. In short, irrespective of the degree of his idealism, Hegel, like the French historians mentioned in the preceding lecture, considered the *social system* the most deep-lying foundation of the life of peoples. In this respect, he was not behind his time, but neither was he ahead of it. He was quite unable to explain the *origin of social system*: to say, as he did, that in any particular period a people's social system, like its political structure, its religious and aesthetic views, and its moral and intellectual condition, depends on the *spirit of the times*—means explaining nothing at all. As an idealist, Hegel considered the Spirit the ultimate mover of the historical movement. When a people goes over from one stage of its evolution to another, that means that the *Absolute* (or Universal) *Spirit*, whose vector that people is, ascends to a higher phase of its development. Since such explanations are explanatory of nothing at all, Hegel was revolving in the same vicious circle as the French historians and sociologists: they explained the social system by the state of ideas, and the state of ideas—by the social system.

We thus see that from all angles—from that of philosophy, of history in the proper sense of the word, and the history of literature—the evolution of social science in its various branches led up to one and the same problem: *the ascertainment of the origin of the social system*. As long as the problem remained unresolved, science was marking time in a logical blind alley when it stated that *B* was the cause of *A*, while at the same time pointing to *A* as the cause of *B*. Conversely, everything would evidently become clear as soon as the question of the social system's origin was solved.

It was the solution of this problem that *Marx* sought when he evolved his *materialist* understanding of history.

In the Preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *Marx* tells us how his studies led him up to that understanding.

"My inquiry led me to the conclusion," he writes, "that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of the human life, the totality of which *Hegel*, following the example of the English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term 'civil society'; that the anatomy of civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy."³⁰²

This, as you see, is the same conclusion that was arrived at both by the French historians, sociologists and art critics, and the German idealist philosophers. But *Marx* went further than they did. He asked what were the causes determining the structure of civil society, and replied that *the anatomy of civil society should be sought in political economy*. Thus, it is the economic system of any people that determines its social structure, the latter, in its turn, determining its political and religious structures and the like. But, you will ask, has not the economic system its own cause as well? Certainly, like everything else in the world, it, too, has a cause, that cause—*the fundamental cause of any social evolution, and consequently of any historical advance—being the struggle man wages against Nature, for his own existence*.

I shall read out to you what *Marx* says on this matter:

"In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material

life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes of the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation."³⁰³

I am fully aware that this language, though extremely clear and precise, may seem somewhat obscure. I therefore hasten to explain the fundamental idea of the materialist understanding of history.

Marx's fundamental idea can be summed up as follows: 1) *the production relations determine all other relations existing among people in their social life*. 2) The production relations are, in their turn, determined by the state of the *productive forces*. Let us see, first of all, what the *productive forces* are.

Like all other animals, man is obliged to wage a struggle for his existence. Any struggle calls for a certain expenditure of *his forces*. The condition of those forces determines the outcome of the struggle. With *animals*, those forces depend on the *structure of their organism itself*: the strength of the wild *horse* differs sharply from that of the *lion*, the cause of that difference lying in the

difference in their *organisation*. Of course, man's physical organisation also exerts a decisive influence on the ways in which he struggles for his existence and on the outcome of that struggle. However, man's physical structure gives him certain advantages which other animals do not possess. Thus, for instance, he is endowed with *hands*. True, his neighbours—*four-handed* animals (apes)—also possess hands, but these are less adapted to various kinds of work than the human hand is.

The *hand*, together with the forearm, is the *first tool*, the first *implement*, used by man in his struggle for existence. The muscles of the arm and the shoulder serve as a kind of spring for dealing blows or hurling objects. Gradually, however, the machine became separated from man. A stone first served man with its weight, its mass. But then, that mass was attached to a handle, thus producing an *axe* or *hammer*. Thus, man's hand, his first tool, *served to produce other tools*, served to adapt matter for the struggle against Nature, i.e., with all other independent matter. The more that subjugated matter was perfected and the more the use of tools developed, the greater man's strength in respect of Nature, and the greater his power over her.

Man has been called a tool-making animal. This definition is more profound than seems at first glance. Indeed, as soon as man won the ability to subjugate and adapt some part of matter for the struggle against all other matter, natural selection and other similar causes were now to exert quite a secondary influence on man's bodily changes. It was no longer his bodily organs that had now changed, but his tools and the things he adapted for his use with the aid of those tools; it was not his skin that had changed with the climate, but his *clothes*. Man's bodily transformation ceased (or became insignificant), yielding place to his *technological evolution*. The latter was an *evolution of the productive forces*, which has a decisive influence on people's *grouping*, and the state of their culture.

Contemporary science distinguishes several social types: 1) *the hunter type*; 2) *the pastoral type*; 3) *the agricultural or settled type*; 4) *the industrial and trading type*.

Each of these types is marked by definite relations among people, relations that do not at all depend on their will, but are determined by the state of the *productive forces*. Let us take *property relations* as an example.

The structure of property depends on the mode of production, since the distribution and consumption of wealth is closely linked with the mode of its acquisition. In primitive hunting peoples, several men are obliged to unite so as to capture big game; thus, Australians hunt the kangaroo in groups of several dozen men; Eskimos muster an entire flotilla of kayaks to hunt

down whales. Captured kangaroos or whales dragged on shore are considered common prizes, each hunter eating as much as he needs to satisfy his appetite. With the Australians, as with other hunting peoples, the territory of each hunting tribe is considered collective property; each hunter searches after quarry within its bounds and as he thinks fit, the only obligation being that he will not enter the territory of neighbouring tribes.

However, in that common property there are articles that are used exclusively by the individual: his clothes and weapons are considered his personal property, whereas the tent and its furnishings comprise family property. In just the same way, a kayak used by a group of five or six is their common property. The factor determining ownership of an object is the way it is made, the mode of production. With my own hands, I have put an edge on a flint axe, thus making it mine; my wife, my children and I have built a cabin: it belongs to the family; I have hunted together with my fellow-tribesmen: the animals we have killed are our common property. The animals I have killed alone in the tribal territory belong to me, but if an animal I have wounded is accidentally finished off by somebody else, it belongs to the two of us, its skin going to him who dealt the mortal blow. For identification, each arrow will bear its owner's mark. Here is a remarkable fact: prior to the introduction of firearms, the North-American Redskins had very strict rules for bison-hunting. If several arrows hit a bison, their distribution decided which parts of the killed animal would go to the various hunters. Thus, the hide went to him whose arrow struck closest to the heart. But since, following the appearance of firearms, bullets bore no individual marks, the carcass was divided into equal shares, consequently being common property.

This example is convincing proof of the close link between production and the structure of property.

Thus, men's relations in the process of production determine property relations, what Guizot called *l'état de la propriété*. However, once the latter has been given, one can easily understand the system of all society, which takes shape according to the form of ownership. Thus, Marx's theory solves a problem which baffled historians and philosophers of the first half of the nineteenth century.

It has often been said—indeed it is still being said—that Marx slandered people in denying the existence of any other incentive except the economic—the striving to acquire material wealth. That is not true, and to show you how false it is, I shall cite an example from *zoology*. You know, of course, that an animal's entire anatomical structure, all its habits and instincts, are

determined by the way it wins its food, in other words, its mode of struggle for existence. But that does not at all mean that the lion has only a single need—devouring flesh, or that the sheep has only one desire—to nibble grass. Far from it. Both herbivorous and carnivorous animals have many other needs and many other inclinations: the need to multiply their kind, the need of play, and so on. However, the way in which these numerous needs are met is determined by the way an animal wins its food. Let us take animals at play as an example....

Lecture Four

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before going over to what might be called the *philosophy of art from the viewpoint of the materialist understanding of history*, I would like to give you some explanations concerning *law and religion*.

To show you how a given people's *law* is linked with its *economic structure*, I would ask you to take into consideration that—as very well pointed out by Letourneau in his *Histoire de la propriété*—the more or less fair regulation of material interests and concern for the protection of those interests are the firm foundation of all recorded legal codes. Indeed, let us take civil law as an example. What is civil law? It is the totality of legal institutions designed to regulate legal relations arising among people in the area of their private interests, i.e., inasmuch as they are regarded as private individuals. These legal relations derive from two different sources: they are born of the kinship that unites certain individuals in a group known as a family, or else they stem from the authority man exercises over things in the outer world, over matter as ruled by him and is subordinate to his will. The sum of relations of the first kind comprises family law; relations of the second kind form the law of property and the law of obligation, or in other words, *patrimonial (hereditary) law* (Ceux de la seconde forment le droit des biens et des obligations ou, en d'autres termes, le droit due patrimoine).

As for right *in rem* (le droit des biens), I have already shown you how it arose from *economic relations*, from *relations of production*. The Australians and the Eskimos. Once property rights exist, one can readily understand that they engender certain rules concerning the transfer of property, the way it passes from one person to another. It is also perfectly clear that the transfer of property from one person to another gives rise to certain *obligations*. Last, it is perfectly understandable that institutions designed to regulate relations that arise between people stand in need of definite *guarantees on the part of society*. Law has been

defined as the *sum of instructions or rules of behaviour to observe which man can be obligated by external or physical coercion.*

When a person encroaches on the rights of another, society subjects *him* to *punishment*. That is the foundation of *criminal law*.

"*Property is theft.*" From the theoretical point of view, this definition is quite wrong. *Theft presupposes the existence of private property.* There is no theft among savage communist tribes because they have no private property.

Public law. The system of society takes shape according to the form of ownership. We have already seen that, in ancient Irish law, the public-law relations between vassal and suzerain were based on property relations. In ancient Greece and in ancient Rome, we can see how landed proprietors created an aristocracy, which alone enjoyed *political rights*. The people participated in government only in those towns in which they were able to take possession of the land.

We thus see with great clarity that juridical institutions are determined by property relations.

The family: the monogamous family as hallowed by law owes its origin to the development of private property and the disintegration of the *clan's communist property*.

Religion: what is religion? There exist innumerable definitions of religion. As for me, I prefer the definition given by Count Goblet d'Alviella, who understood by religion the *form in which man realises his attitude to the superhuman and mysterious forces on which he considers himself dependent.* It is generally recognised that religion has exerted a considerable influence on the evolution of the human race. I make no mention here of Bossuet, or Voltaire. There can be no doubt of the degree of that influence, to understand which one must gain an understanding of the origins of religion, or man's attitude to supernatural forces.

How does a belief in the existence of supernatural forces arise in man? The reason is very simple. A belief in those forces owes its inception to *ignorance*.

Primitive man transfers the properties of his "I" to certain creatures and objects of the world about him. It is difficult to imagine movement and action unguided by some kind of will or consciousness. As primitive man sees it, everything in Nature is animate. The extent of that imaginary life grows ever less in his eyes as he learns to observe more keenly and reason better. But while that realm of imaginary life exists, it is inhabited by gods.

Note that, in the early stages, such *animism does not exert the least influence on man's behaviour in society. At first, the idea of the gods as well as that of an after-life contains no moral content,*

a future life usually being seen merely as a continuation of life on earth; the land of the dead greatly resembles the land of the living, with the same habits, customs and way of life. Life beyond the grave is merely a copy of earthly life, a world inhabited by people. The same kind of fate awaits both the good and the evil.

Distinctions began gradually to creep in: life in the world beyond is pleasant for some, but sad and burdensome for others. In some cases, future life falls to the share only of the grand and the rich, the souls of ordinary men and women either perishing together with their bodies or else being devoured by the gods. In other cases, different dwellings await the souls of the departed: one is for the grand, the warriors and the rich; in it life is bounteous and joyful; the other dwelling is for slaves and the poor, whose existence is a miserable one, and who in any case do not enjoy the pleasures designed for those whose good fortune accompanies them beyond the grave. The aspect of moral reward is still non-existent in this case, but it later emerges by degrees. Thus, married warriors of the Futuna Hoorn Islands in Polynesia go straight to heaven if they fall on the field of battle; they share the life of the gods and enjoy plentiful and dainty food, entertainment and games. The place of honour is for those who have been killed in battle. As they feel the approach of old age, they bathe in the invigorating waters of Lake Vayola, and emerge resplendent in their youth and beauty.

In a word, retribution for crimes is first seen as a private matter both in this world and the next, but then the gods' authority grows together with the power of the earthly rulers, and their functions multiply; unsatisfied with meting out punishment for crimes directly affecting them, the gods also punish those their loyal servants and worshippers have fallen victim to. Later, the gods—at least those who dwell in the land of the dead—appear as judges who weigh all human acts on their legal scales and hand down punishment even for transgressions which do not affect them at all. There then strikes root the idea of a god as Supreme Judge and, by natural association, the idea of a god who hands out rewards, a god who, in the after-world, rewards those who have suffered injustices in this world, a god of justice and grace, who, in the world to come, dries the tears shed by believers in this life because of undeserved misfortune.

Consequently the idea of god as gradually evolved by men runs parallel to social change. It is only in comparatively highly developed societies that religion becomes a "factor" of social life, a factor which, as we have seen, is *created* by social evolution. If we can link up the latter with economic development, then we shall have every right to say that the evolution of religion is determined by economic evolution.

Let us go over to art.

Science now recognises that animals (the higher ones) do not spend all their muscular and mental energy to meet the needs of their material existence; they also spend them on purposes that are directed, not towards winning any advantage but only to their own amusement; in short, they have their games. Men, too, have their games, *these being in fact artistic activities in embryo.*

Let us first consider *dances* as the most primitive of all arts. The males of some species of birds perform real dances for their females when they court them.

Such dances also exist with humans: these are dances of *courtship*, whose character changes together with the evolution of mores. Alongside of such dances there appear others, whose import is quite different.

Hunting dances: these consist in an imitation of the movements, ways and manners of the animal that is a tribe's main quarry. Thus, Australian natives try to imitate the kangaroo and the emu, the hunting of which plays a decisive part in their lives. In just the same way, Kamchadal dances imitate the clumsy movements of the bear. Among the Redskins, the buffalo dance, performed in appropriate costumes, preceded the bison hunt. I could give you many more examples of this kind, but I think I have offered enough, and prefer now to go on to *women's dances*.

Serious dances, which usually depict various events in their struggle for existence, their work. Thus, Australian women imitate diving in search of sea shells, digging up edible roots to feed their children with, or climbing trees to catch phalangiers.

To all this I shall add that children's games are imitations of work performed by their elders.

What do all these dances represent? They reproduce, in games and primitive art, *people's productive activities. Art is an immediate image of the process of production.*

War dances. War is merely another kind of hunting, in which the enemy is the quarry; this is also depicted in dances which reproduce scenes of battle. These are sometimes accompanied by dramatic dialogue. Thus, in their dances, the inhabitants of New Caledonia conduct the following dialogue with their chiefs:

"Shall we attack our enemies?"

"We shall."

"Are they strong?"

"No, they are not."

"Are they brave?"

"No, they are not."

"Shall we kill them?"

"Yes, we shall."

"Shall we eat them?"

"Yes, we shall."

And so on and so forth.

Dances are sometimes accompanied by singing, in which case they become genuine works of art, like the impi dance described by Stanley in his *Dans les ténèbres de l'Afrique*.^{*} See quotation (op. cit., p. 407).

Songs. Among primitive peoples, work is always accompanied by singing, with melody and text being secondary and the accent on rhythm. Song rhythms reproduce work rhythms with precision; music owes its origin to work. There are songs for one voice or many voices, that depending on whether the work is done by an individual or a group.

Bücher's conclusions:

"My studies have led me to the conclusion that work, music and poetry are intimately interlinked. One may therefore ask oneself: were these three elements independent of one another at first, or perhaps they were born together, and separated only later, after a long period of differentiation? If that is so, which of these three elements was the nucleus, which was later joined by the others? The *answer* is that work was the element that formed the nucleus, it being later joined by the two other elements—music and poetry."

Examples: A song of the Negro porters employed by the English traveller *Burton*:

SOLO: *The bad white man is coming from the coast.*

CHORUS: *Trail, trail!*

SOLO: *We shall follow him, the bad white man.*

CHORUS: *Trail, trail!*

SOLO: *And we shall stay with him while he gives us good food.*

CHORUS: *Trail, trail!*

A Lithuanian wheat-threshers' song:

Clipp, clapp, clapp,

Clipp, clipp, clipp,

Clipp, clipp, clapp, clapp!

All this is accompanied by imprecations against the overseer or their employer. A song of the Lithuanian woman hand-miller:

Sing, sing, my mill,

I think I'm not alone.

^{*} [Plekhanov is quoting from the French translation of H. Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*.]

Or else:

*Why, O tender youth,
Has your glance rested on me,
A poor girl, etc.*

Painting. Hunting peoples are very good painters.

Ornamentation. The ornamentation employed in those distant times is clearly indicative of the development of the decorative arts. Primitive pottery was embellished with purely linear decorations consisting of zigzags, curves and various diamond-shaped, oblique-angled and criss-cross patterns.

However let us leave the Antipodes and their eucalyptus forests, for the European continent. Here, for many of reasons, we shall best choose France as an example.

France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a civilised land with very few traces of primitive communism. For many centuries her population had been divided into two big classes—the aristocracy, and the common people, the third estate.

How did this division affect French art? In reply to this question, I will ask you to recall Madelon's words in Molière's *Les précieuses ridicules*:

"Ah! mon père, ce que vous dites-là, est du dernier *Bourgeois*. Cela me fait honte de vous ouïr parler de la sorte...."*

A nobleman would feel ashamed to speak "comme un *bourgeois*". Thus, one's manner of expression was also in keeping with the social structure, a trend which could not but find expression both in literature and art. Hippolyte Taine showed already how French tragedy was born of the manners and tastes of the French aristocracy of the seventeenth century. Indeed, so strong was the influence exerted by those manners and tastes on literature, not only in France but in England as well, that Shakespeare was in complete disfavour during the Restoration (1600-88). His *Romeo and Juliet* was considered a poor play....

At the same time, it was customary only for kings and queens, heroes and princesses to appear on the stage, and speak on matters of no less importance than the possession of crowns or the downfall of states. Like Molière's Madelon, people were afraid to be a dernier Bourgeois. Heroes of hoary antiquity appeared on the stage in the guise of marquises: in the middle of the eighteenth century, Caesar would perform on the stage in a *peruke*, while Ulysses would appear among the waves, all *bepowdered*. *Voltaire on Hamlet*. "Imagine, messieurs, Louis XIV in his Hall of Mirrors (in Versailles), surrounded by his resplendent court, and imagine

* [Oh, father, nothing can be more vulgar than what you have just said; it makes me ashamed to hear you speak in this way.]

a jester clad in tatters pushing his way through that gathering of the heroes, the great men and beautiful women making up that court; he proposes that they should abandon Corneille, Racine and Molière in favour of Punchinello, who shows signs of talent, but insists on making faces. What do you think? How would such a jester be met?"

The reaction. The tearful comedy, a *genre* half way between comedy and tragedy, brings ordinary people, virtuous or almost virtuous, onto the stage, and shows them in grave, solemn or sometimes pathetic situations which invoke virtue in us, move us at the sight of misfortune, and make us applaud the triumph of virtue. This *genre* of comedy, which was introduced by La-Chaussée in France, first appeared in England. The unbridled licentiousness of literature and especially of the theatre during the Restoration led, at the end of the seventeenth century, to a reaction which was fostered by the political events. The public sentiment induced authors to write in a most virtuous vein. It was Blackmore, a mediocre poet, who launched the crusade against the cynical licence that reigned on the stage. The mortal blow was dealt by Jeremy Collier, who was followed by Lillo (*Fatal Curiosity*, 1737) in which two old men....

Thus, art in primitive, more or less communist society is subjected to the *direct* influence of the economic condition, and the state of the productive forces. In civilised society, the evolution of the fine arts is determined by the *class struggle*. The latter is, of course, also determined by economic evolution but the operation of the economic structure is in all cases *mediated* in nature.

ON A BOOK BY MASARYK

The Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Marxism. Studies on the Social Question, by Tomáš Masaryk, Professor in the Czech University in Prague. Translated from the German by P. Nikolayev. Moscow, 1900.

Here is a book which should be mandatory reading for anyone who takes an interest in a "*criticism of Marxism*". True the language of the translation is abominable, with the translator frequently *failing to understand* the author; that is why an acquaintance with the German original would be more rewarding. But even in the atrocious Russian translation, the book will still be of use to readers: it will reveal to them the *psychology* of the "*critical*" gentry who take cover behind threadbare phrases on the harm of orthodoxy, the need to march forward ... sorry ... *to turn back*, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Masaryk is a scholarly, thorough and unsparing critic, though not without a certain condescending urbaneness. He has examined Marxism in the minutest detail and—woe to us, "orthodox" Marxists!—he has toppled this theory once and for all. He has proved that Marx and Engels—but no, that is not the right approach; we shall take things in their proper order.

"Thus, Marx's materialism is a fairly complex structure. It is quite obvious that Marx attempted to provide a synthesis of various views that had matured in his time. The objective critic can hardly find this synthesis convincing. Marx and Engels's philosophy bears the imprint of eclecticism. Despite all their propensity for criticism, neither of them has the critical approach or the creative power required to blend the heterogeneous elements of present-day trends in one harmonious whole" (p. 82).

So Marx and Engels turn out to be *eclectics*. On closer acquaintance with this harsh verdict from our "objective critic", we recalled the vice-president of the Criminal Court in Herzen's *Passing By*, who says, "Do you, Sir, consider me a Turk or a Jacobin, expecting me, out of sheer laziness to make the fate of

some unfortunate man even worse", etc. Herzen says in this connection: "Note that in the past, the Jacobins were accused of everything, but it is exclusively to Vladimir Yakovlevich that the honour belongs of accusing them of laziness." In exactly the same way, it is to Mr. Masaryk that the exclusive honour belongs of accusing Marx and Engels of *philosophical eclecticism*. We extend our felicitations to the Herr Professor of the Czech University: at least, he is not lacking in *originality*.

But what does the *original* accusation levelled by Mr. Masaryk rest on? It rests on numerous pieces of evidence, which are sometimes just as *original* as the accusation itself.

Marx was a Hegelian at the outset, but then went over to Feuerbach's viewpoint. He borrowed the *dialectical method* from Hegel, and *materialism* from Feuerbach. However, dialectics and materialism are incompatible: "Materialist dialectics is a contradiction in adjecto," says our objective critic (p. 45). If he is right, then we must reluctantly admit that the philosophy of Marx (and Engels) is indeed imbued with eclecticism. But is he right? That is the question. What does he actually say?

Here it is: "According to Marx and Engels's theory of knowledge, a concept is the reflection of things in the brain; what that reflection is, and how it is possible in general, is something we shall not examine at the moment, but it is obvious that with such a point of view, the dialectics of concepts is impossible" (pp. 45-46). We shall also "*not examine at the moment*" the question of how things are reflected in the brain, but we do insist on learning why it is that, "*with such a point of view*", the *dialectics of concepts is impossible*. Here the question is obviously one of *how matters stand in Nature*: if, as Engels says, everything in it takes place *dialectically*, then it is self-evident that *concepts, which are a "reflection of things in the brain"*, must also be of a dialectical nature. It is strange that so simple and, it might be said, so *inescapable* a consideration did not occur to Mr. Masaryk; that must have been due to some temporary absent-mindedness.

"Marx does not recognise double cognition, as Hegel does," Mr. Masaryk goes on, "higher, dialectical cognition, and simply cognition through reason" (the German original runs: *verstandesmäßige*, which means *cognition with the aid of the intellect*, and not of *reason*, as Mr. P. Nikolayev has translated it.—G. P.), reason, which does not overcome contradictions" (p. 46).

C'est selon, our objective critic! If you were to attentively read Engels's *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*, or at least his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, you would not have forgotten what he says there about the relation of *dialectical* thinking to the *metaphysical*. Engels rates *dialectical* thinking *higher than metaphysical*, but it never occurs to him to deny the

latter's relative validity. Within certain limits, metaphysical (or *intellectual*) thinking is absolutely essential, but it is far from sufficient for a proper understanding of processes in Nature and social life. *It has to be complemented by dialectical thinking.*³⁰⁴ That was what Engels thought; of course, he was, in this case, speaking not only for himself but for Marx. Yet our objective critic has equated this thought to a *complete rejection* of metaphysical (intellectual) thinking, and advances this *invented rejection as an argument against* dialectical materialism. What kind of criticism is this?

"Marx recognises no a priori cognition," we read further on. "For him, there exist no a priori notions of time and space.... In general, Marx is not a subjectivist, i.e., is not an idealist, and he is therefore quite consistent in his rejection of Hegel's dialectics. Engels and Marx have praise for Feuerbach as one who has overcome Hegel's dialectics, but then they suddenly accept that dialectics in full" (p. 46).

Here we must sort things out. When Marx and Engels had praise for Feuerbach for his having "overcome" Hegel's dialectics they were referring to *idealistic* dialectics, which they from then on never ceased from regarding in a negative light. But when they defended and recommended the dialectical method, they had in view (and always brought to the reader's notice) *materialist* dialectics, which had been of such great service to them in their scientific substantiation of socialism. There is absolutely no contradiction here at all.

That they did *not* recognise Hegel's dialectics "*in full*" (as is asserted by our "objective critic") is to be seen from their criticism of it as *idealistic*. Why assert what has never existed?

Mr. Masaryk has set out to prove to us that *materialist* dialectics is a contradiction in adjecto; he now no longer distinguishes that dialectics from the *idealistic*, and asserts that Marx and Engels, who first rejected the latter, "then suddenly" accepted it in full. Making such sudden and logically unjustifiable leaps reveals a complete confusion in argumentation.

But let us again hear what our "objective critic" has to say. "At all events, Marx and Engels sought to substantiate dialectics only in Nature.... But from Nature, dialectics finds its way into the brain (which is also part of Nature), so that ultimately materialism proves in possession of the same method as idealism" (p. 46. The Russian translation runs: "Dialectics is a method just as idealism is." This makes no sense).

What our critic has just said shows how thoughtlessly and prematurely he has set out to assert that the dialectics of notions is impossible: indeed, if processes in Nature are dialectical, and if "from Nature dialectics finds its way into the brain" (what

amazing style!), then it is clear that the dialectics of notions is both *possible and necessary*. We have already mentioned this circumstance, which is now also recognised by our "objective critic", who did not previously deem it worthy of notice. This has made us very glad for ourselves, for Marx, for dialectics, and for our critic too.

"For its dialectics, Marx's materialism draws on the same source as Hegel (again: what amazing style!); he, too, rejects the logical law of contradiction (in Mr. P. Nikolayev's Russian translation: *the proposition on contradiction*); Engels has the same high praise for Heraclitus as Hegel had. Marx sees in movement the source of all life; we live in the midst of constant movement; what is immobile is only our abstraction of movement—*mors immortalis*."

Again, what an incomprehensible mish-mash of ideas.

We already know that Engels recognised the *relative validity* of metaphysical thinking. To do that means the same as recognising the *relative* (though, of course, not the *absolute*) *significance of the logical law of contradiction*. But recognising the relative significance of that law in *no way implies negating it*. Its relative significance was denied by Hegel just as little as it was by Engels and Marx. Had our learned critic gone to the trouble of studying Hegel's *Logic*, he would have understood what nonsense he has ascribed to these thinkers. But everything goes to show that our learned critic has *no acquaintance at all with Hegel*, and, in speaking of him, is satisfied with a repetition of certain platitudes without the least genuinely critical content.

Further: What if Marx does see in movement the source of all life? Does that prove that the "source of the dialectics" in his materialism is the same as in Hegel's idealism? In Hegel's system, it is the *movement of the Idea* which is the "source of dialectics", but not the *movement of matter*, which, according to Marx and not only according to him, is the source of all life. How can one lump together these two utterly distinct "sources"?

We shall not dwell on the *high praise* for Heraclitus. It goes without saying that this is no proof of what Mr. Masaryk would like to prove.

"We should therefore not be surprised that Engels sometimes" (the German runs: *unter der Hand*—secretly, imperceptibly) "obviously accepts subjective dialectics" (p. 46).

We think that Engels recognised subjective dialectics, not only *unter der Hand* but quite straightforwardly and openly. This can "surprise" only those who have no understanding at all of Engels's world-outlook. Mr. Masaryk is undoubtedly of their number. If he ascribes to Engels only a concealed (*unter der Hand*) recognition of subjective dialectics, it is because he him-

self finds *any* recognition of it *surprising*. Yet what could be simpler or more natural? If our concepts are "*reflections*" of processes taking place in Nature, then they *cannot but contain the dialectical element*.* Anyone who recognises that dialectical processes exist in Nature is *forced to recognise "subjective dialectics"*. Who can find this "surprising"?

"Marx and Engels failed to understand that Hegel's dialectics was not suited to them," Mr. Masaryk stubbornly insists. "This is a highly important circumstance: we meet with many contradictions in detail in their writings, and this is explained by the contradiction in the theoretico-cognitive substantiation of the entire system" (p. 46).

Does our critic really think that Marx and Engels failed to understand that? Marx and Engels did reject Hegel's *idealistic* dialectics. Why do you pretend to have forgotten this "*highly important circumstance*"? We know the reason why. You are aware that many serious objections have been raised to *idealistic* dialectics, while you have been unable to invent a *single* serious objection to *materialist* dialectics! To extricate yourself from this embarrassment, you have tried to shift the blame by ascribing Hegel's idealistic dialectics to Marx and Engels. That is, of course, a highly convenient device, but how convincing is it?

On the next page Mr. Masaryk is again false to himself by saying: "It is true that Marx and Engels rise up against Hegel, and condemn his method." Now the question is: what is to be done with the "*highly important circumstance*" of their failing to understand that Hegel's dialectics was not suited to them? As you have put it, this "*circumstance*" underlay all their errors. Mr. Masaryk himself realises how such a contradiction is "*not suited*" to him, and tries to play it down ("*blunt*" it, as Mr. P. Struve and I would say) with the following *Redensarten*. "But it is possible to speak against Hegel still more, and more ardently, in the way Schopenhauer has done, yet the same Schopenhauer who had realised Hegel's error, used a method that was no less fantastic and subjective. In just the same way, Marx and Engels fought in vain against the pressure exerted on them by Hegel" (p. 47).

Fought in vain against the pressure! You will agree, Herr Professor, that this is very vague wording. If that is all you can say about Marx's method, then your "*critical*" aspirations are far in excess of your critical faculty.

Incidentally, our Professor is not yet through with his research into Marx's method. Let us hear him out to the end.

* We cannot discuss here how the term "*reflection*" should be understood. We shall deal with that in detail elsewhere. This is the more necessary for the "*critical*" gentry harp on it, depicting it as sheer absurdity. Incidentally, we gave a partial explanation of it in our article "Materialism Yet Again".

"Objective dialectics simply does not exist." That is something we have already heard, but we ask you to prove it to us, Herr Professor. "In Nature itself, there exists no dialectical contradiction." Again, this is not *proof*, but a fresh *repetition* of what we have requested the critic to *prove* to us. "We can speak of attraction and repulsion in the natural-scientific sense of the terms, of love and hatred, of war and peace in human society, but all this is neither Hegel's nor Marx's dialectics." Consequently, there are two kinds of dialectics: *Hegel's* and *Marx's*. Far from explaining to us the difference between them, our Professor has depicted things in a way that suggests that Marx's dialectics in no way differs from Hegel's. And this is what he calls *criticism*. What strange terminology! What an incomprehensible critic! The rest of the sentence we have copied out is *again, not proof but repetition of what calls for proof*. What amazing acuity of critical thought!

Further, our Professor pretends that he wishes to "carefully analyse" an example of dialectics in Nature which Engels has quoted, and claims that this example contains "something distinct from what Engels wishes to prove" (pp. 47-48). The reference is to the well-known example of the oat seed. "I shall not expatiate on this example; it is immediately obvious that it is unsuitable—at least, fertilisation, growth, development and reproduction (*Vermehrung* in the German) are something different from Hegel's thesis-antithesis-synthesis. This is indeed a process of development, and in its continuity and infinitely small changes it differs substantially from the dialectical triad" (p. 47). That is all. Our Professor goes on to add only the following laconic remark: "The other examples from various spheres of knowledge also present a picture of non-dialectical development."

That fertilisation, growth, development and reproduction are something different from *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis* is indeed "*immediately obvious*" but it is also *immediately obvious* that absolutely nothing is proved thereby. After all, a body's *fall* and its *reflection* are something quite, quite different from the *theorem in mechanics* which says that the *angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection*. But does this "highly important circumstance" prove the erroneousness of the theorem? Will it occur to anybody to question this *binomial* theorem by pointing out that movement is an uninterrupted process accompanied by infinitely small changes? Have a heart, Herr Kritik! It is with good reason that, as you have yourself stated, you see the world "*theistically*!"

We have now taken measure of all the depth of the "criticism" directed by the Professor against Marx's dialectics. Mr. Masaryk goes on to discuss Hegel in the following terms:

"Already Hegel advances the concept of development and progress, but that concept is not at all in keeping with present-day views ... he sees development through the medium of catastrophe, the medium of major upheavals and contradictions. In this he is followed by Feuerbach, and Marx was a follower of the two" (p. 48).

Here the Professor is again speaking of what "*never existed*". Never did Hegel say that development takes place *only* "through the medium of catastrophe, of major upheavals and contradictions". He was very well aware that the process of development also consists of *infinitely small changes and contradictions*, and added that these infinitely small changes and contradictions, *far from precluding "major upheavals and contradictions", sometimes inevitably lead to them*. He questioned the validity of the well-known proposition that *Nature makes no leaps*. If the Herr Professor of the Czech University finds Hegel's arguments groundless, let him disprove them. However, he does not even attempt to do that, but *confines himself to distorting Hegel's thought*. Some "critic"!

But that distortion is highly characteristic in itself, revealing as it does the psychological substratum of all present-day attacks on Hegelian dialectics. The latter is displeasing to the philistines because it justifies "*major upheavals*". Das ist des Pudels Kern, and of course the same motivation accounts for the even more negative attitude of those selfsame philistines to Marx's materialist dialectics. This "important circumstance" is one of the most telling proofs of the deep decline in philosophical thinking among the educated bourgeoisie of today.

The reader will now have realised why Marx and Engels's philosophy is marked by "*eclecticism*". (It is because that philosophy is a veritable *algebra of revolution*.) If its revolutionary content could be deleted from it, "critics" such as Mr. Masaryk would at once call off their attacks, and it would find numerous adherents among those educated elements of the petty bourgeoisie who are ready to champion *social reforms* but are horrified at the sheer thought of *social revolution*.

"Reformation, nicht Revolution!", Mr. Masaryk exclaims in Paragraph 146 of his book, which has for some reason been omitted by the Russian translator ((could the censor have banned this contraposition of reform to revolution?)). This significant exclamation is accompanied by a highly moral sermon on the subject that "without a genuine reform in our thinking and our morals, we shall, by means of revolution, exorcise the Devil only to replace him with Beelzebub", etc. (pp. 551-52 in the German original). And this sermon has all the greater effect on the reader for the preacher piously raising his eyes heavenwards.

"With Marx," he says in connection with the growing number of suicides in civilised countries, "we see with special clarity whence that frame of mind appeared in him, and he himself spoke about it: after Feuerbach had destroyed Heaven, nothing remained for philosophy but to revolutionise the Earth. Faust, Cain, Manfred, Rolla and Ivan (in *The Karamazov Brothers*³⁰⁶—G. P.)—all these modern titans begin the struggle against the deity, and end up in revolution or death (how terrifying! God be merciful to me a sinner.—G. P.). Schopenhauer also did away with God, and declared that a blind will lacking all aspirations was the World Substance. Marx and Engels also replaced God by Matter ("The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God!"—G. P.), and gave themselves up to the power of blind chance. Engels quite consistently saw blind evil as a driving world force; history is made by the blind passions of rapacity and a thirst for power. In a blind and despicable world, there is neither room nor time for joy and love. When Jesus gave up the ghost there was a darkness all over the earth, and the sun was darkened, says the Evangelist; in just the same way, darkness descends on man's inner world (das Innere; which Mr. P. Nikolayev has translated "*the internal*"—G. P.) when God dies in him, or man kills him. The Hegelian Left killed God in the same way as Schopenhauer did. Hegel's work was completed by Feuerbach, Strauss, Stirner and Marx. And there was a darkness all over the earth, and the sun was darkened" (p. 505).

It must be frankly admitted that Mr. Masaryk certainly writes well about God. Our Mr. Struve and Mr. Berdayev also write quite well about that "Substance", but they cannot hold a candle to Mr. Masaryk: they lack the sublimity and the feeling that mark the divine preaching of the Herr Professor in the Czech University. True, Messrs. Struve and Berdayev quite recently began to write about the "sublime", but both of them lack the necessary skill. They, too, will doubtlessly achieve perfection in due course.

Is it necessary to add that Mr. Masaryk has exploited in every way, (this for his anti-revolutionary ends), Engels's well-known introduction to Marx's book on the class struggle in France?³⁰⁶ In it he saw a "complete renunciation of revolution". (It follows that Engels, like Mr. Tikhomirov, "*ceased to be a revolutionary*".³⁰⁷) In the preface to the new edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* we tried to show that when Engels (declared the revolutionary mode of action inexpedient), he was referring, properly speaking, *only* to contemporary Germany, in no way attaching to his arguments and conclusions the universal significance ascribed to it by the "critics". We do not know how *convincing* our arguments were, but their *correctness* was borne out in Engels's

letters to Paul Lafargue,³⁰⁸ recently published in the Paris *Socialiste*. Following the publication of these letters, all loose talk about Engels having "*seen the light*" towards the end of his life (and that he "*ceased to be a revolutionary*") becomes meaningless; what remains is the question *why Engels, who could express his thoughts so vividly and clearly, this time did it in so obscure and misleading a fashion*. Only one answer is possible to this question, namely, that Engels yielded to the insistence of the "*practical politicians*" in his party. In view of the confusion of notions caused by Engels's compliance, it must be admitted that it was out of place and that, in general, the interests of theory should never be sacrificed to practical interests of the moment. *First and foremost, it is unpractical.*

But enough about this aspect of the matter. Besides the above-mentioned element of "*eclecticism*", Mr. Masaryk has also made more discoveries in the theory of Marx and Engels. Thus, he mentions *Darwinism*, which these two thinkers regarded as the triumph of dialectics in biological science. In Mr. Masaryk's opinion, Darwinism is not consonant with Marxism, and for the following reason: "Marx and Engels appreciate in Darwinism, first and foremost, the idea of evolution, but they fail to notice that this idea contradicts their dialectics and their historical materialism." Here we come up against the same mode of argumentation we saw above at first hand: Mr. Masaryk *repeats any proposition he finds fit to prove*, very naively considering that repetition is proof. Incidentally, we shall try to be fair to him. His *repetition* has in its wake something resembling *proof*. "To say nothing of Darwin recognising forces of development quite different from those Marx does, Darwinism simply deals, not with the fact of the development of the world and the society but mostly with what they are developed by, and how" (p. 49).

Darwin recognised certain "forces of development" in animal and vegetable species. That is true, but in what does his view of those forces differ from Marx's? Mr. Masaryk says nothing on this score, and we know practically nothing about it for the simple reason that Marx wrote nothing on the subject, while Engels, on the whole, *agreed* with Darwin's views. Perhaps what Mr. Masaryk wants to say is that, even in his *sociological* deviations from the *biological theme*, Darwin continues to adhere to a viewpoint that has nothing in common with historical materialism. In that case, his statement makes sense, and does not contradict the truth. Indeed, Darwin did not achieve historical materialism; indeed, he was inclined to apply his *biological* theory to an explanation of *social* phenomena. But that is *Darwin's* error, not *Marx's*. If Darwin confused two categories of phenomena which should be kept separate, is it possible, for that reason, to accuse of *eclecti-*

cism Marx and Engels, who, in the sphere of *biology*, adhered to the viewpoint of Darwinism, and in sociology, to the viewpoint of *historical materialism*? That reproach might be justified only if we admitted that one cannot simultaneously be a *Darwinist* in biology, and a *Marxist* (an adherent of historical materialism) in sociology. But *that has not yet been proved; it is precisely what has to be proved*. It is something that our critic does not prove, and he is constantly falling into one and the same logical error. Petitio principii is the main weapon of his "criticism".

Marx's "eclecticism" also consists in Marx (like Engels) being, not only a *materialist* but also a *positivist*, without even suspecting it himself (p. 59).

But what is *positivism*? Mr. Masaryk does not define this philosophical concept, so it remains for us only to surmise on that score. For example, he finds Engels a *positivist* when the latter says: "To comprehend the real world—Nature and history—just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist crotchets ... mercilessly to sacrifice every idealist crotchet which could not be brought into harmony with the facts conceived in their own and not in a fantastic interconnection. And materialism means nothing more than this."³⁰⁹ The Professor evidently thinks that a materialist cannot speak in this way. He thinks so because he is not acquainted with materialism. One can find any amount of such "positivism" in the works of the French materialists of the eighteenth century (cf. for instance, end of Chapter 6 in Part Two of *Système de la nature*). But what concern is that of the Professor? He wants no truck with materialism. But he has no knowledge of it. "Feuerbach," he says, "thought so critically that he was unable to accept materialism in its entirety, with all its consequences" (p. 55). But this is something the Professor heard from Engels, who *knew* what these words meant when he wrote them, while Mr. Masaryk *did not know* what they meant when he *copied* them out. In consequence, he bolstered them with the following consideration: "that is why we find him" (Feuerbach—*G. P.*) making such original excuses, when to a question on the origin of the Spirit he replied that it came from the same place as the body, and developed together with the body, etc." (p. 55). What is so "original" in this? Exactly the same thing was said, for example, by *La Mettrie*, who, of course, accepted materialism, "*with all its consequences*". And why are they "excuses"? Do the facts show anything contrary to what Feuerbach said about the mutual relation between "Spirit" and matter?

Incidentally, a few words about materialism. Our "objective critic" holds forth as follows: "Here, understandably enough, the entire question consists in whether present-day science and espe-

cially biology will make so bold as to propose a doctrine to the effect that the Spirit is the highest product of matter, as Engels puts it. I think there is no need for me to say that, for a long time past, no serious researcher has ventured to affirm it. Engels, however, permits no doubt of his materialist dogmatism" (p. 56). Excellent. But let us open a French translation of Huxley's book on *Hume*, where we come across the following passage on page 108. "*Surely no one who is cognisant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity*" (our italics). Is this not the very same thing that Frederick Engels said in the above-mentioned passage, where he called *Spirit* precisely what Huxley termed the *materials of our consciousness*? Or perhaps the celebrated British naturalist was not a *serious student of Nature*?

"Where does everything come from—both the material and the human head?" Mr. Masaryk caustically asks Engels (p. 55). This ineffably naive question again shows that the Professor has not the slightest idea of materialism. Never have the materialists claimed that their doctrine can provide answers to *such* questions. What they have always said is that *these questions lie beyond the purview of knowledge*. In this respect, the learned professor could find some very instructive pages in the writings of La Mettrie, a materialist ("with all the consequences") he has absolutely no knowledge of. But if the materialists have always declined to reply where "*everything*" comes from, including what is "*material*", that does not prevent them from thinking that their doctrine provides better answers to questions within our ken than any other philosophical system does. Of course, there is no obligation to agree with that claim (there are all sorts of things that do not have to be agreed with!) but anyone who disagrees will have to *refute* the materialists, and not *bother them with questions whose very posing shows that the botherer has not the slightest really critical development*.

We are quite incapable of presenting in this brief (and modest) note *all* the gems of philosophical thought scattered throughout Mr. Masaryk's book, in which only one section is devoted to philosophy. It is followed by other sections equally rich in gems, which are there for the reader himself to gather. For our part we shall select—that for lack of space—only one gem, which refers to the *materialist understanding of history*.

"The question stands as follows: do production relations, animal needs, or however else such relations are formulated, constitute the ultimate driving forces of history? Are they the *main* forces? Are they genuine creative forces?" (p. 116).

Indeed, dear reader, Mr. Masaryk considers it possible to "formulate" production relations as "animal needs"! This is indeed the gem of gems. It is impossible, and unnecessary, to conduct any further discussion with a man capable of *such* "formulations".

While reading the section devoted by Mr. Masaryk to historical materialism, we could not but recall our good old Mr. Kareyev. Mr. Masaryk, who knows Russian and has often quoted from Russian authors, seems to be greatly indebted to Mr. Kareyev, from whom he has borrowed many of his remarkable "formulations"; only he has amended and supplemented them, making them ponderous and pedantic. He has also borrowed some "formulations" from Mr. Nikolai Mikhailovsky and other Russian "critics" of historical materialism. Of course, he has interlarded such borrowings with a considerable element of verbosity and pedantry.

With all these borrowings, this verbosity and pedantry, Mr. Masaryk has shown, in his "criticism" of Marx's historical views, a marked resemblance to ... Herr Eduard Bernstein. Les beaux esprits se rencontrent.

After all that has been said above, the reader will understand that Mr. Masaryk does not like Marx's theory of value, and *especially of surplus value*. It could not be otherwise, of course.

In conclusion, we shall again say to all who take an interest in "criticism" of Marxism: do not, do not fail to read Mr. Masaryk's book, despite the poor Russian translation. It will reveal the psychological substratum of that criticism which seems so much the vogue. In that sense, we can say: O rare Mr. Masaryk! We Marxists should be glad to witness the appearance of such a "critic".

THIS THUNDER IS NOT FROM A STORM CLOUD

(A Letter to the Editor of [Kvali])

Sir:

You wish to learn what I think about Mr. A.'s articles as published in B. under the title of U.³¹⁰ My opinion of them is the same as yours—i.e., *they are worthless*. But you say that they have produced a certain impression on people who have never before studied the questions these articles deal with. I therefore believe it would be of some use to subject them to a thorough analysis. I shall begin with *philosophy*.

Mr. A. is most contemptuous of the philosophy of Hegel, whom he calls a *reactionary*. But calling a philosopher a *reactionary* does not yet mean defining his philosophy. A thinker whose sympathies lie with *reactionary* trends in society may at the same time evolve a system of philosophy deserving full *attention* and even *sympathy* from *progressists*. One should be able to distinguish between a writer's *theoretical premises* and the *practical conclusions* he himself draws from his theoretical premises. The practical conclusions may be erroneous or hostile to mankind's progress. At the same time, however, the *premises* underlying these wrong or harmful *conclusions* may prove *both correct and useful*—useful in the sense that, *if correctly interpreted*, they produce a fresh argument, or even a number of arguments, in defence of *progressive* aspirations. That is why such epithets as *reactionary* or *progressive* in no way characterise the *theoretical* merits or errors of a particular philosopher. Anyone who wants to annihilate him in the opinion of thinking people must first refute the *theoretical* part of his doctrine. Only after the theoretical part has been refuted is he entitled to refer to the practical *striving* or to the *influence* of the social environment which have induced the thinker to *distort the truth* or *have prevented him from achieving it*. If this condition is met, reference to the thinker's political sympathies (*reactionary, progressive, etc.*) will help establish the origins of his errors. If that condition is not met, *criticism* becomes *accusation*, and *accusation* turns into

sheer *rebuks*. The rebuke may have some highly honourable purpose but it is no substitute for *criticism*.

Mr. A. does not *criticise* Hegel but only *rebukes* him. His reference to Wundt proves nothing at all, since the sentences he quotes contain nothing but an *unmotivated verdict*. Or perhaps Mr. A. thinks that we must believe in Wundt's *prestige*? But prestige is a poor guide to philosophy; had mankind always firmly believed in prestige we would have now possessed neither philosophy nor any other kind of knowledge. However, I do not think that Mr. A. has demanded of us a *belief in Wundt's prestige*. He has most probably referred to that writer's opinion as that of an intelligent and educated man: the opinion of an intelligent and educated man is always of interest. The trouble is that intelligent and educated people often fail to agree on all points, so nothing is easier than to contrast the opinion of an intelligent and educated man with that of another just as intelligent and educated. Mr. A. will agree that this greatly complicates the matter.

Mr. A. makes reference to Wundt. Of course, he is fully entitled to do so. But I have the same right to make reference to another writer, this time a Russian, who was most intelligent by nature and who devoted much time (as will be seen from his *Diary*) to a careful study of Hegel's philosophy. That writer was *Alexander Herzen*.

"When I got used to Hegel's language and learnt his method," Herzen wrote, "I began to see that Hegel stands far closer to our views than to those of his followers; he was such in his first writings and he was like that wherever his genius took the bit between his teeth and dashed off, in forgetfulness of the *Brandenburg Tor*."¹¹ Hegel's philosophy is an algebra of progress; it liberates man extraordinarily, and utterly destroys the world of outmoded legend. However, it is poorly formulated, perhaps deliberately."

Like Mr. A., Russian writers of the Narodnik and "subjectivist" trend are very hostile to Hegel, whom, like Mr. A., *they do not know at all*. They consider, for example, that Hegel had an extremely harmful influence on the genius of Belinsky who, they assert, began to think properly only when he "*parted with the philosophical cap*" of the German philosopher."¹² Several years ago it was proved in the Russian periodical press that Belinsky's infatuation with Hegel's philosophy testified to his exacting demands in questions of theory, and cannot in any way be considered a *period of stagnation in his intellectual development*. It was proved at the time that even when Belinsky had "*parted with Hegel's philosophical cap*" he did not abandon the viewpoint of Hegel's philosophy. But the Narodniks and the subjectivists have had such things to be proved to them only because these gentlemen

are ignorant of philosophy and understand nothing of Belinsky's philosophical views. There would have been no need to try to explain all this to Herzen because, as a man well-versed in philosophy, he himself knew all this very well. "Belinsky did not abandon, together with his one-sided understanding of Hegel, the latter's philosophy," Herzen wrote. "On the contrary, that was the starting point of his lively, apt and original blend of philosophical ideas with the ideas of revolution."

It follows, then, that Hegel's philosophical ideas could easily blend with the progressive. It follows, too, that Russian literature is deeply indebted to Hegel in the person of one of its most talented representatives. That is something quite different from what we have been told by the Russian Narodniks and "subjectivists" and, after them, by our severe Mr. A.

I invite Mr. A. to refute the opinion of Alexander Herzen, which I have quoted.

Whenever he takes up this refutation, he will have to turn his "critical" attention to another Russian writer, who was also a highly intelligent man and who, like Herzen and unlike Mr. A., knew and understood Hegel's philosophy. That man was *Nikolai Chernyshevsky*.

In his *Articles on the Gogol Period of Russian Literature*, Chernyshevsky spoke in detail about Hegel in connection with his vogue in the celebrated Belinsky-Stankevich circle.³¹³ As Chernyshevsky put it, Hegel's main and outstanding service consisted in his taking philosophy out of the realm of abstract thought and in his keen attention to reality. "To explain reality has become a prime duty of philosophical thinking. Hence the extraordinary attention to reality, to which no thought has previously been given, a reality that has been rudely distorted to suit personal one-sided prejudices.... But, in fact, everything depends on circumstances, on the conditions of place and time, which was why Hegel recognised that the previous general statements used to judge of good and evil, without consideration of the circumstances and causes producing a given phenomenon — that such general and abstract statements were unsatisfactory. No abstract truth exists; the truth is concrete, i.e., a definitive statement can be made only about some definite fact, after examination of all the circumstances on which it depends."*

Elsewhere, to wit in an article which Chernyshevsky devoted to an analysis of one of his own writings, i.e., *The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality*, he describes his attitude towards Hegel as follows:

* *Sovremennik*, 1856, Book 9, "Criticism", p. 12. Now, as it is known, there is a separate edition of *Articles on the Gogol Period of Russian Literature*, which I do not have at hand.

"We often see people who are continuing some scholarly work rebel against their forerunners, whose works have served as a point of departure for their own. Thus, Aristotle was hostile to Plato, Socrates utterly humiliated the Sophists, whose successor he was. Many such instances are also to be found in modern times, but there sometimes occur gratifying cases of the founders of some new system clearly understanding the link between their own views and those of their predecessors, and modestly calling themselves their pupils, and of the latter, on discovering shortcomings in the concepts held by their predecessors, honestly revealing how much such concepts had promoted the development of their own ideas. Such, for instance, was Spinoza's attitude to Descartes. It stands to the credit of the founders of present-day science that they have regarded their precursors with esteem, almost with filial love; they have fully recognised the vastness of the latter's genius and the lofty nature of their doctrine, which contains their own views in embryo. Mr. Chernyshevsky is aware of that, and follows the example of those whose ideas he applied to questions of aesthetics.

"His attitude to the aesthetic system, whose inadequacy he was out to prove, was not at all hostile; he acknowledged that it contained the germs of the theory he himself was trying to build up; and that he was merely developing some essential points also present in the previous theory but in contradiction to other notions, to which it ascribed more importance and which seemed to him incapable of standing up to criticism. He was constantly trying to show the kinship between his own system and the preceding, though he made no secret of the substantial difference between them."

For the reader to understand this categorical statement by Chernyshevsky about his own attitude to his predecessors, some explanations will be useful. Mr. A. would do well to go deeper into them.

Chernyshevsky's work *The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality* dealt critically with the aesthetic system of the well-known German writer Fischer, who was a *pure Hegelian*. Since Chernyshevsky found it necessary to frankly declare that in his book he had not taken a hostile stand to Fischer, that meant he considered it harmful to spread hostility to Hegel's philosophical system among the Russian reading public.* Further, whom did Chernyshevsky have in mind when he spoke about the founders of pres-

* Those who have read Hegel's *Aesthetics* and Fischer's *Aesthetics* are aware how impossible it is to isolate the aesthetic theory given in Fischer's book from basic propositions in Hegel's philosophy. Mr. A. has not, of course, read these works, but if he ever goes to the trouble of looking into them, he will hardly make so bold as to question my words.

ent-day science? Of course, it was *Feuerbach*, whose views he applied to questions of aesthetics, and not to it alone. In his words, the founders of present-day science regarded their precursors with esteem and almost with filial love; they have fully recognised the vastness of the latter's genius and the lofty nature of their doctrine, which reveals their own views in embryo. Who, then, were the precursors of "the founders of present-day science"? Mr. A. himself will have little difficulty in replying to the question: the *great German idealists* were Feuerbach's precursors in philosophy. Of these, *Hegel* stood closer to Feuerbach than all the rest, as anyone familiar with the history of German philosophy knows, and as was pointed on many occasions by Chernyshevsky himself. It follows that, in the latter's opinion, it stood to Feuerbach's credit that, far from feeling enmity for Hegel, he regarded him with esteem and almost filial love. Chernyshevsky himself deemed it necessary to emphasise that he regarded Hegel in exactly the same way as, in his words, Feuerbach did. This bears little resemblance to a negative attitude towards "reactionary" Hegel which we see in Mr. A.'s article. What is the reason? It is simply that Chernyshevsky knew Hegel, while Mr. A. has not the slightest knowledge of him.*

But Chernyshevsky did not confine himself to merely *stating* his esteem for Hegel. In his usual terse style, he *explained* why he regarded Hegel in that particular way: he realised (and these, as the reader could see, were his own words) that Hegel's system contained the germs of a theory he himself had tried to evolve and that he had merely developed some important points which had existed also in the "previous theory". In view of this, Chernyshevsky's esteem for Hegel can be no surprise even to the ignoramuses: indeed, who but the insincere and morbidly vain would permit themselves to regard with contempt a thinker in whose doctrine they discern the germs of their own ideas?

If there is nothing surprising in the esteem that Chernyshevsky held Hegel in, who, *again except for the ignoramuses*, can find anything surprising in the esteem in which the author of *Capital* held Hegel? The views of the author of *Capital* were the natural development of the views of Feuerbach, who was *Chernyshevsky's teacher* in philosophy and was himself a *disciple of Hegel*. Marx realised that (to use Chernyshevsky's words) Hegel's philosophy contained the germs of a theory which he himself had tried to evolve; that he merely developed some important points which had existed also in Hegel's philosophy but contradicted other notions to which the latter ascribed greater importance and which

* Incidentally, Chernyshevsky never considered Hegel a *reactionary*; he called him a *moderate liberal*.

seemed to him (Marx) incapable of standing up to any criticism.

I think that I am running ahead here. Before discussing the relation between Marx's philosophical views and Hegel's philosophy, we must decide how the latter should be regarded by us, educated and impartial readers and writers of the early twentieth century.

I said above that philosophical questions cannot be solved by references to *prestige*. I would be behaving very badly if I were to lose sight of that *now*, i.e., when such prestigious writers on philosophical matters as Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Chernyshevsky have spoken in favour of Hegel and against Mr. A. No, however great the prestige of these men may be, we must rely on our own judgement and decide for ourselves, through our own efforts and on the basis of our own knowledge, how we should regard Hegel's philosophy, which has been the source for the theory of the German Feuerbach, and of Nikolai Chernyshevsky, the latter's Russian disciple.

To decide that matter, it would be useful for us to establish why Chernyshevsky saw in Hegel's philosophy the germs of his own views, or more precisely, the views of his own teacher Feuerbach.

The gist of the matter lies "*in the extraordinary attention to reality*" which, in Chernyshevsky's opinion, is Hegel's main advantage over his predecessors in the realm of philosophy.

Those from whom Mr. A. has acquired his contempt for Hegel, i.e., the Russian Narodniks and subjectivists, usually depict the German idealist's philosophy as an endless distortion of reality to suit speculative theories. They have vociferated so much about such distortion that readers poorly versed in the history of philosophical thought have begun to believe them. Some may therefore find surprising Chernyshevsky's remark on Hegel's close attention to reality. Yet the remark is quite true.

In his *Encyklopädie* Hegel points out that youth is prone to take up abstract ideas while the experienced person sees no attraction in the abstract *either-or* (entweder-oder), but seeks the foundation of concreteness. Perhaps Chernyshevsky had these words in mind in speaking about Hegel's close attention to reality; at all events, he was undoubtedly right and could have said even more than he actually did: he would have every right to affirm that Hegel's philosophy, thanks to his extraordinary attention to reality, had a tremendous if as yet insufficiently appraised influence on the development of nineteenth-century social thought, and that it was largely because of this philosophy that thinking people of that century realised the inadequacy of the abstract *either-or* viewpoint.

Chernyshevsky explains Hegel's thought, using *war* as an illustration. "Is war baneful or beneficent?" he asks. "In general, one cannot reply here in any decisive terms: one should know which war is in question; everything depends on circumstances of time and place. The Battle of Marathon was a most beneficent event in the history of mankind." Rain is another example. "Is rain a blessing or an evil? This is an abstract question which cannot be answered definitively: rain is sometimes useful but sometimes, if more rarely, causes harm; one should ask definitively: has rain been useful if it fell after the wheat sowing has been completed, and it lasted for five hours? In this case, a definitive answer can be given: yes, it has been useful."

He who reasons in the abstract follows the abstract *either-or* formula (Hegel's *entweder-oder*): rain is *either* harmful *or* useful; war is *either* baneful *or* beneficent. He who, following Hegel's advice, seeks the *foundation of concreteness*, will ask, like Chernyshevsky: precisely what kind of rain is meant; what kind of war is under discussion? At first sight, the very existence of people who follow the abstract *either-or* formula (war is *either* baneful *or* beneficent) may seem doubtful; in fact, there have indeed been many people of this kind;* before Hegel's time, there were even more of them. The abstract *either-or* view is not only a feature of callow "youth"; there have been epochs in which all thinking people, with extremely few exceptions, took this standpoint and would have been greatly surprised to learn that it was unsatisfactory. Such was the case in eighteenth-century France, for example.

The French Enlighteners of the time viewed social life as an abstract oppositeness of *good* and *evil*, of *reason* and *non-reason*, abandoning this view only in the most exceptional cases. Once a given social phenomenon, for example *feudal ownership*, had been deemed harmful and *unreasonable*, they could never agree that it had been *reasonable* in the more or less distant past. Here is one of very many examples. In a letter to Saurin, Helvetius says of Montesquieu's celebrated *Esprit des lois*: "But what the devil does he want to teach us in his *Traité des Fiefs*? Is that a matter that a wise and reasonable mind should seek to unravel? What legislation could result from this barbarous chaos of laws established by force, made respectable by ignorance and always opposed to a good order of things."** Elsewhere Helvetius remarks: "Montesquieu is too much of a feudalism, yet feudal government is the height of absurdity."*** We now look differently upon feudalism;

* e.g., Leo Tolstoy, who came to the conclusion that *war is always and indisputably harmful*.

** *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1818, t. III, p. 266.

*** *ibid.*, p. 314.

we now understand that, in its time, it was by no means meaningless.* But we regard things in this way and in no other because we know to what extent everything depends on conditions of time and place, and how groundless are the pseudo-truths which result from the *abstract either-or* view: war is *either baneful or benificent*; feudalism is *either reasonable or senseless*, etc. Helvetius, however, was not yet aware of that; like the vast majority of his contemporaries, he held the *abstract either-or* view.

Or else consider the history of socialism. Already in the early nineteenth century, one could come across a negative attitude towards abstract reasoning on the "*either-or*" formula, in the writings of some socialist authors. I could quote some very interesting passages from Saint-Simon and his followers. Yet their negative attitude towards the *abstract either-or* was the *exception rather than the general rule*. Socialists of the time were more prone to adhere to the abstract viewpoint they inherited from the eighteenth century. It was from that point of view that they regarded the most important practical problems of their times. It was for that and only for that reason that we call them *utopians*. The various schools of those utopians proposed highly differing plans for the organisation of society. However different they were, all these plans agreed on one point: each of them was based on a definite view of *human nature*.** *Human nature was the supreme* (authority for socialists, the one they turned

* Fustel de Coulanges gives a good explanation of how the attitude of the lower classes towards feudal castles changed at different periods:

"Six siècles plus tard," he says, "les hommes n'avaient que haine pour ces forteresses seigneuriales. Au moment où elles s'élevèrent, ils ne sentirent qu'amour et reconnaissance. Elles n'étaient pas faites contre eux, mais pour eux. Elles étaient le poste élevé où leur défenseur veillait et guettait l'ennemi. Elles étaient le sûr dépôt de leur récolte et de leurs biens ... Chaque château fort était le salut de son canton" (Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*, t. VI, p. 682-83). [Six centuries later the people had nothing but hatred for feudal fortresses. When they were being built the people felt only love and gratitude towards them. They had been built not against but for them. They were the towering watchposts where their protectors kept vigil and lay in wait for enemies. They were safe store-houses for their crop and their property ... every fortified castle was the salvation of its district.]

** According to Considerant, the "general social problem" (le problème social général) should be as follows:

"Etant donné l'homme, avec ses besoins, ses goûts, ses penchants—déterminer les conditions du système social le mieux approprié à sa nature" (*Destinée sociale*, 3^e édition, t. I, p. 332). [Given man's needs, tastes and inclinations, we have to determine the conditions of the social structure best suited to his nature.]

Similarly, Désamy declares:

"Mon critérium, ma règle de certitude, c'est la science de l'organisme humain, c'est-à-dire, la connaissance des besoins, des facultés et des passions

to on all moot points of the social structure. Since the socialists of the time considered human nature immutable, it is clear that we may think that, of all the many possible social systems, one can be found best suited to human nature; hence the striving to find the best system, or rather one best suited to human nature. The founder of every school assumed that it was he who had discovered such a system. The founder of every school (doctrine) proposed his own utopia. But is it possible to find the very best system of the social structure? No, that is impossible).

The eighteenth-century Enlighteners understood that man's character changes with the environment. "L'homme est tout éducation", said Helvetius, and, *in this respect*, the eighteenth-century Enlighteners were quite right. Indeed, the "nature" of the ancient Persian or Egyptian did not resemble that of the ancient Greek or Roman, while the "nature" of the ancient Greek or Roman was something quite different from that of the present-day Englishman or citizen of the United States of America. If we assume that a definite social system is wholly suited to man's nature, while all other systems violate that nature in greater or lesser degree, we thereby proclaim that all history is out of tune with human nature, with the exception of the period (past, present or future) to which we can refer our favourite system. But that view *precludes any kind of scientific explanation of history*. That is why we now say that the systems of the socialist writers mentioned have been *unscientific*, which, of course, does not prevent us from finding individual *details* which have been exceptionally meaningful contributions to science. The authors of the utopian systems stood on the *abstract "either-or" platform, rather than on a concrete one*: they did not as yet know that there is no abstract truth, that truth is always concrete, and that in social life, everything depends on circumstances of place and time.

If I had to give Marx's contribution to social science in a nutshell, I would say that his theories *dealt utopianism a mortal blow*. Indeed, he never appealed to human nature. He knew of no social institutions which are *either* in keeping with that nature *or* not in keeping with it. As early as in his *Poverty (of Philosophy)*, we find a most remarkable and typical rebuke of Proudhon: "M. Proudhon does not know that all history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature..." (Paris, 1896, p. 204).³¹⁴

In *Capital*, Marx says that man by changing the environment by his activities, changes his own nature, too (*Capital*, III,

de l'homme (*Le code de la communauté*, par T. Désamy, Paris, 1842, p. 9). [My criterion, my standard of authenticity is the science of the *human organism*, i.e., the study of man's needs, abilities and passions.]

I could cite many such examples.

pp. 155-56).³¹⁵ Let us consider private ownership of the means of production, for example. The utopians wrote a great deal on the subject and carried on polemics with one another and with economists as to whether private property should exist, i.e., whether it is in keeping with human nature. Every utopian considered the question from the *either-or* standpoint, whereas Marx put it on a concrete foundation. According to his theory, the forms of ownership and property relations are determined by the development of the productive forces. One form of ownership is suited to a definite stage of the development of those forces; another form is suited to another stage; but nothing absolute can be affirmed here, *since an absolute decision would necessarily be abstract; but there is no abstract truth; truth is always concrete and everything depends on circumstances of time and place.*

With such a view on the matter, a negative attitude towards any attempt to find the best social system is quite natural: in each given period, the best system is that which is most in keeping with the state of society's productive forces. At the same time, the worst system is that which presents the greatest obstacle to the further development of those forces. A social system which was perfectly reasonable a century or two ago may prove quite absurd today.

It is negative attitude towards utopias that gives the Marxist theory of social development the full right to be called *scientific*. Scientific theories, of course, are not infallible either. Marx could err like anyone else, but the point is that Marx took up a concrete stand which made a scientific attitude towards the object possible, i.e., an attitude towards the object *from the viewpoint of the law-governed necessity of the process taking place in it*; the eighteenth-century Enlighteners and utopians of all times regarded social phenomena from the *abstract* (and therefore unscientific) *either-or* standpoint, which precludes any possibility of discovering the *concrete truth* and leaves room only for solutions suggested by subjective likes or dislikes.

Utopianism was dealt a mortal blow by Marx, who was able to do so thanks to the *very method which he adopted from Hegel and which was so highly praised by Chernyshevsky*. Hegel's method was good because it precluded the possibility of an abstract judgement of things, and called for their appraisal from the viewpoint of conditions of time and place.

After what has been said, one can understand why Hegel's philosophy was appreciated by progressists such as Herzen and Chernyshevsky. That philosophy said that one has to stand on concrete ground and regard objects from the standpoint of circumstances of time and place. Those circumstances, however, are changeable. *Therefore, "all is flux, nothing is stationary", as He-*

raclitus, one of the most remarkable of ancient dialecticians, said. Neither in Nature, social life, nor in men's concepts is there—or can there be—anything that could lay claim to immutability. Thus, stagnancy loses all theoretical justification, and perpetual movement proves to be the basic rule of all that exists.

This was excellently expressed by the selfsame Nikolai Chernyshevsky. "An eternal succession of form; an eternal rejection of form engendered by a definite content or striving, as a consequence of intensification of that striving, and the supreme development of that content," he exclaims in his article "A Critique of Philosophical Prejudices Against Communal Land Ownership"; "anyone who has understood this great eternal and universal law, and has learned to apply it to any phenomenon,—oh, how confidently does he avail himself of opportunities which escape others! By repeating after the poet:

*Ich hab' mein' Sach auf Nichts gestellt
Und mir gehört die ganze Welt,**

he regrets nothing that outlived its time and says: what will be—will be, yet our day will come!"

And there are wretches with no philosophical training whatsoever, people who have never read a single page of Hegel's writings and have hardly seen those works even from afar, who have the temerity to call this *algebra of progress* (to quote from another of our progressists) a philosophy of reaction! Ignorance has always been self-confident, arrogant, and boastful, but in this case it has gone to extremes of self-assurance and arrogance also in its boastful desire to "*criticise*" quite unfamiliar things.

The reader may, however, well ask whether Hegel could have twisted the facts and their actual relationships, to make them fit into his theory. Can there be no grounds for the bitter reproaches still being heaped on him by his opponents? As the proverb says: where there is smoke there is fire.

The proverb is not lying, I shall reply; the rebukes heaped on Hegel are not groundless: there were, indeed, cases of his twisting the *facts* to adapt them to his theory; however, I do not think he was more at fault than F. A. Lange, who has distorted the history of materialism beyond all recognition in the interests of so-called *critical philosophy*. In any case, *dialectics has nothing to do with it*. It was not because Hegel adhered to the dialectical method, which called for the greatest attention to the true relations between objects that he twisted the facts (*whenever he did so*). Twisting the facts was something Hegel found unavoidable at times because of the *idealism that his philosophical system was*

* [I stake on "no" and the world belongs to me!]

steeped in. To understand that, one should recall how matters stood in Hegel's philosophy of history.

As a *dialectician*, Hegel—contrary to the eighteenth-century Enlighteners—regarded history as a *process of development*, which we must understand in its *necessity*, i.e., in other words, as a part of a *law-governed pattern*.^{*} That aim is served first and foremost by *studying the facts*. "We must take history as it is," says Hegel; "we must act empirically, and, incidentally, not yield to the influence of the expert historians, especially the German experts, who enjoy considerable authority and do exactly the same things they reproach the philosophers for, i.e., permit themselves a priori inventions in history."^{**} Do not think that Hegel's scathing condemnation of "*a priori inventions*" was just a phrase. No, anyone who has carefully read his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* knows with what deep thought he considered the empirical material at his disposal. In those *Vorlesungen*, there are numerous valuable indications concerning the true and uninvited causal connection between historical phenomena. As for the ideas expressed there concerning the influence of the *geographical environment on the historical development of human societies*, their sober realism is simply amazing. Read the chapter "Geographische Grundlage der Weltgeschichte" and compare it with Mechnikov's book *La civilisation et les grands fleuves historiques* or Ratzel's well-known treatise *Anthropogeographie* and you will see how close Hegel's views in that field are to those of our contemporary men of science.

But as an absolute idealist, Hegel considered the logical development of the *Absolute Idea* the principal and most profound cause of all phenomena in Nature and social life. That is why, with him the natural sciences and history were a kind of *applied logic*. Thus dialectics was "*turned upside down*", and the very same man who used to say that we should take history as it is, and cautioned his audience against any "*a priori inventions*", was himself given to such inventions and riding roughshod over his empirical material whenever it did not fit into them.^{***} Turning dialectics "*upside down*" is a feature of Hegel's *Vorlesungen* on world history that is most interesting and instructive to us. This, undoubtedly, has weakened their scientific worth; what is at

* "Die Weltgeschichte ist ein Fortschritt im Bewusstsein der Freiheit,— ein Fortschritt den wir in seiner Notwendigkeit zu erkennen haben." *Philosophie der Geschichte* (*The Philosophy of History* ed. by Ed. Hans, p. 22.) [World history is progress in the consciousness of freedom, progress which we must recognise in its necessity.]

** *ibid.*, p. 13.

*** For more details see the article "Zu Hegel's sechzigstem Todestag" in *Neue Zeit* of 1891.

fault here is not dialectics, but the *idealist nature of Hegel's philosophy*. When Feuerbach and then Marx exposed the unsoundness of Hegelian *idealism*, they set dialectics the *right side up*, making it a powerful instrument of scientific research.* To attribute the unsoundness of Hegelian *idealism* to Marxist materialist dialectics means either a failure to understand the state of the matter, or deliberate distortion beyond all recognition.

Mr. A. is deaf to any other scientific method but the *inductive*. It would be easy to show him that, as far as scientific research is concerned, *deduction* has the same rights as *induction*,** but that would divert me from the matter in hand. I am dealing with *dialectics*, and have no wish to digress. Let us see whether induction precludes dialectics.

There is a work in German natural-science literature, entitled *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*. It is by that very *Haeckel* whose "*monism*" Mr. A. so willingly contraposes to Marx's *materialism*. The opening chapters of this work set forth the views of Linnaeus, Cuvier, Agassiz and other naturalists of the old *pre-Darwinian trend*. I would strongly advise Mr. A. to give careful thought to this exposition. To help him in this, I will ask him what method it was that helped Linnaeus, Cuvier and Agassiz to evolve their views. In other words, could these outstanding scientists have made use of induction? Anyone with some knowledge of natural science will unhesitatingly reply in the affirmative: indeed, these scientists could and did make use of induction: it was through the method of induction that they arrived at their views. Good, but in what do these *inductively* evolved views differ from those later evolved by Darwin, Haeckel and other natural scientists, again through induction?

(Haeckel himself replies as follows: "In the opinion of Darwin and his followers, various species belonging to one and the same genus of animals and plants represent breeds derived differently from one and the same initial forms; then, according to the theory of development, all genera of one and the same order also derive from a single common form; the same can be said of all the classes of one and the same order. Yet Darwin's opponents, proceeding from the opposite viewpoint, are of the opinion that all species of animals and plants are quite independent of one another, but that only those individuals which belong to one and the same species derive from a common form.... Linnaeus formulated

* Feuerbach speaks of the unsoundness of Hegelian idealism in many of his works; as an instance I can cite *Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft*. Marx wittily criticises Hegel's idealism in his book *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik*.

** Mr. A. can read about this in a work he has so often quoted from: John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic*, Vol. I, pp. 536-39, eighth edition.

this concept as follows: 'There exist as many species as were originally created by the Infinite.' ('Species) tot sunt diversae, quot diversas formas ab initio creavit infinitus'.)*

Note this distinction, and call to mind how Engels describes the world-outlook of the *metaphysician*:

"To the metaphysician, things and their mental images, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other, are objects of investigation fixed, rigid, given once for all."³¹⁶ Don't you think that this definition is most applicable to Linnaeus and his adherents, Darwin's opponents, who regarded plant and animal species as immutable and rigid forms given once and for all time? If that is really so, we can, to use Engels's terminology, call the old doctrine of species *metaphysical*. And now see how the *dialectical* world-outlook is characterised by selfsame Engels. Dialectics considers things and their mental reflections (notions) in their mutual relation, in their connection, in their motion, and in their appearance and disappearance: "Nature is the proof of dialectics, and ... modern science ... has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals ... are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years."³¹⁷ As we can see, Engels's dialectical world-outlook (and also of course Marx's) is the one advocated by Ernst Haeckel—in its application to Nature. However, *Haeckel's dialectical views were evolved inductively, exactly as the metaphysical views of Linnaeus, Cuvier, Agassiz and other luminaries of the old biology were*. What does that mean? It means that the *dialectical world-outlook precludes induction just as little as the metaphysical one does*. That is why it is at least strange to contrapose induction to dialectics.

*Induction is generalisation through experience.*** The view of objects as independent, immutable, and given once and for ever does not at all preclude such generalisation. Therefore *induction is compatible with the metaphysical world-outlook*. In the same way, a generalisation based on experience is compatible with a view on objects as being interlinked and involved in a process of constant change. Therefore *induction is also quite compatible with the dialectical view of things*. If, however, Mr. A. uses induc-

* Cf. *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* by Haeckel, Berlin, 1868, S. 34.

** "Induction properly so called ... may ... be summarily defined as Generalisation from Experience" (John Stuart Mill, l.c., Vol. I, p. 354).

tion to intimidate us adherents of dialectics, then that happens solely because he has understood the nature of induction as little as that of dialectics.

Far from precluding dialectics, induction, by building up our stock of generalisations, sooner or later reveals of necessity the unsoundness of the metaphysical view, and leads up to the *dialectical*. The history of biology provides excellent proof of this, and Mr. A. can see it for himself by reading at least Haeckel's *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*, which I have just cited from.

Note also that *dialectical thinking does not preclude metaphysical thinking either*: it merely assigns definite limits to it, beyond which lies the realm of dialectics. This is something the "critics" of the dialectical method do not want to take into account, yet it was Hegel who explained it so excellently. According to Hegel, cognition begins when existing objects are taken in their separateness and in their distinctions. Thus, individual substances, forces, genera, etc., are differentiated in the study of Nature; they are "fixed" in all their isolation. While matters are like that, "*reasoning*" with all its *metaphysical* devices is prevalent in scientific thinking. But knowledge does not end at this stage. It goes further, its next success consisting in the transition from the *rational* (or *metaphysical*) viewpoint to that of "*reason*", or *dialectics*. "Reason" is not halted by the borderlines established by the understanding. Whereas the latter fixes objects and phenomena as immutable, independent, and separated from one another by a bottomless gulf, reason investigates those objects and phenomena in the process of their change, in the process of their appearance and destruction, and in the process of their interaction and transition of one into another.*

If you shed the somewhat curious impression produced by the now unusual terminology ("understanding", "reason"), you will agree that Hegel's argument on the rights of the "*understanding*" as against those of "*reason*" is perfectly correct in essence, and that it defines the course of scientific development most precisely. Were it not for the now unusual terminology, one might imagine that one was reading a treatise by some present-day Darwinian (NB—with some education in philosophy) who has made up his mind to impartially determine how (the views of Linnaeus and other adherents of the doctrine of the immutability of species relate to the more progressive views of Darwin and his followers. After all this, can one talk so irresponsibly of the "unscientific nature" of Hegel's thinking? However, Mr. A. does not understand why Engels calls views on animal and plant species similar to those of Linnaeus metaphysical. In his opinion, the words "meta-

* See Paragraph 80 in Hegel's big *Encyclopaedia* (1st part).

physics" and "metaphysical" mean something quite different. Let us "enlighten" the "critic".

What is metaphysics? What does it deal with? It deals with the "unconditional" or the "primary" (the "Infinite", the "Absolute"). However, what is the main distinctive feature of the "unconditional" or "primary" in the doctrines of the old pre-Kantian philosophy? Of course, it is immutability and permanency. That is so because the unconditional, the immutable, the Infinite, is independent of the conditions of time and space, which change any object and phenomenon. That is why it (the unconditional) is immutable.

Let us now consider what that distinctive feature of cognition is which is used by those whom Engels calls the metaphysicians. As can be seen from Linnaeus's cognition of species, immutability is the distinctive feature of that cognition. In that case, cognition is in itself and in its own way boundless and unconditional. Consequently, the nature of such cognition is identical to that of the "unconditional", which constituted the object of the old metaphysics.

That is why Hegel calls metaphysical all those sciences which, to use his terminology, are created by the intellect, i.e., are immutable and utterly separated from one another.* If Mr. A. absorbs all this, which is so unexpectedly new to him, he will realise that Engels was not the first writer to use the terms "metaphysical" and "dialectical" in our meaning. It was Hegel who originated that terminology.

Mr. A. tries to contrapose Engels to Marx. He quotes pages devoted by Marx to the *history of French materialism*. From those pages, one can see that, when Marx wrote them, he did not use the word "metaphysics" in the sense I have just explained and Engels had in mind. At the time, Marx called *all German idealistic philosophy* metaphysics. Of course, Mr. A. is delighted to have spotted an alleged contradiction. He does not even suspect how important it was in the history of Marx's intellectual development.

The thing is that the pages quoted by Mr. A. constitute a chapter (later published separately) of a book written by Marx in collaboration with Engels, under the title of *Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik*, which was published in Frankfurt on the Main in 1845. At the time of its writing, the break with Hegel's idealism was, to Marx, still a fresh recollection; that idealism itself was still a most dangerous enemy. "Real Humanism has no

* To define these views with exactness, I have made reference to Linnaeus's doctrine of species. But the history of the science of society contains no fewer, if not more, lucid examples of that. Remember what was said above about the utopians and the Enlighteners. To understand Hegel's views of the old metaphysics it would be useful to read Paragraph 31 of his *Encyklopädie*

more dangerous enemy in Germany than spiritualism or speculative idealism...,”³¹⁸ said Marx and Engels in the Foreword to the book. At a time of struggle, it is difficult to escape going to extremes, and it is almost impossible to avoid injustice towards the enemy. Marx, too, was not fair to German *idealism*. Despising it as *metaphysics*,* he contraposed *materialism* to it. Subsequently, however, he saw that he had gone too far: he recalled the *methodological* merits of German idealism, and realised that the old materialism, which had found expression in eighteenth-century French materialism, had not shed the shortcomings inherent in the old *metaphysics*. Then he discontinued using the word *metaphysics* in the sense he attached to it in the book: *Die heilige Familie*, and gave the word the more precise meaning I have explained above, and already established by Hegel. It is the meaning the word has in the works of Engels, which are under attack by Mr. A. What, then, does the *difference of opinion between Marx and Engels* as discovered by Mr. A. boil down to? It consists in Marx having used the word “*metaphysics*” in *Die heilige Familie* in a sense different from the way Engels used it in the 1870s in his *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*.** That is all. It is not very much, but this little will grow even less if we remember that, *in the forties, Engels himself used the word metaphysics in the same sense as Marx did at the time***; in the seventies (and already much earlier) Marx himself came to use this word in the meaning Engels attached to it in his polemic with Dühring*. Incidentally, proof of this can be found in the critical comments on the “*materialism of the natural scientists*”, which Mr. A. came across in Volume I of *Capital*, and which exasperated him.**** These remarks exposed what Engels called the *metaphysical element in the old materialism*. Yet this is *indirect* proof, whose sense may escape Mr. A. Here is a more direct evidence. The book *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* was written by Engels in close ideological contact, *and even in collaboration*,

* The reason was that Hegel himself, who had exposed the nature of the old metaphysics so brilliantly, found that one could not after all do without metaphysics, and strove to evolve a *new* one which, in his opinion, would be free of the shortcomings of the old variety. He said forthright that the *dialectical* element of philosophy should be complemented by the *metaphysical*. Hegel's idealism was made up of these two elements, and when Marx called it *metaphysics* he had in mind its metaphysical component, not the dialectical.

** The above-mentioned exposition of the metaphysical and the dialectical world-outlook is taken from that book.

*** See the same book, *Die heilige Familie*, which, as I have already said, was written by Marx in collaboration with Engels.

**** I shall deal with the ridiculousness of this exasperation in another letter.

with Marx. In it, Engels reiterated that he was voicing views *he shared with Marx*. Had Marx found that it was not the case and that Engels regarded metaphysics differently from him, he would certainly have made that clear to the reader. He did not do so. Consequently, the terminology used by Engels did not in the least contradict Marx's view at the time.

The change in the meaning Marx and Engels used the word *metaphysics* in can be called a remarkable feature in the history of their intellectual development. Only one who does not wish to think or is totally incapable of thinking could see some contradiction here, and contrast the Marx of the *forties* with the Engels of the *seventies*.

Mr. A. is much put out by Engels presenting Bacon and Locke as metaphysicians. But Engels has given them that name in the same sense as he would have used it in respect of Linnaeus, i.e., to show that they did not adhere to the *dialectical* point of view. Was Engels right, or *not*? *If he was wrong*, then Mr. A. should show up Engels's error by revealing the dialectical nature of the philosophy of Bacon and Locke; Mr. A. has failed to do so for the simple reason that he is ignorant of Bacon and Locke,* metaphysics and dialectics. He has confined himself *to raising a fuss about the use of words whose meaning has remained unknown to him*. What a critic!

However, it is time to wind up. In my next letter, I shall examine this critic in another aspect, but I do not vouch for that other aspect producing an impression more favourable than the one we have just formed. On the contrary, I am very much afraid that we shall have to repeat, when we hear the peals of his thunderous criticism:

This thunder is not from a storm cloud!

* I shall have to speak of Locke in my next letter where I shall show how poorly Mr. A. has understood him.

ON CROCE'S BOOK

Benedetto Croce. *Economic Materialism
and Marxist Political Economy. Critical Essays.*

Translated by P. Shuttyakov. Published by B. N. Zvonaryov.
St. Petersburg, 1901

Signor Benedetto Croce considers himself a Marxist. However, there are various kinds of Marxists. There are, in Signor Croce's words, some who "are always ready" to accept Marx's views "without discussion and with that absence of freedom and intellectual originality which is to be seen in all their literature" (p. 243). Signor Croce calls such Marxists *vulgar* (p. 244). Yet there are Marxists of a different coinage, those that *criticise* their teacher and are marked by "intellectual originality". To such belongs Signor B. Croce, who thinks that his "critical" essays "in their sum comprise fairly complete research into almost all the fundamental problems of Marxism" (p. 3). To this, however, he adds the modest reservation "*if I am not mistaken*", but his brash tone shows his conviction that no such mistake exists here and that, indeed, the fundamental propositions of Marxism have been seriously and thoroughly (and, of course, "*critically*") studied in his essays. The claim, as one can see, is no small one. But is it well-grounded? We shall now see.

Signor B. Croce "analyses" Marx's law of the fall in the rate of profit. The "vulgar" Marxists accept this thesis "without discussion", in the way formulated and substantiated by their teacher. With the freedom and intellectual originality inherent in him, Signor Croce could not leave this law "unstudied". He has made use of "logical arguments", "arithmetical calculations" and even the "enlightened intuition of common sense" (p. 256; the Russian translation says: "the induction of common sense", but this is a misprint, a slip of the pen or an error); all this has led him to the firm conviction that Marx was badly mistaken in this case, so much so that his method "fell apart in his hands" (p. 259). Elsewhere in the same essay, Signor Croce's critical analysis leads to a result even sadder for the author of *Capital*: it appears that Marx "invented" his law of the fall in the rate of profit "out of his hatred for the kind of political economy he contemptuously called vulgar" (p. 256). Things must be in a pretty bad way, and

we, vulgar Marxists, have suspected nothing. Horrible is the dream but merciful is the Lord. Let us turn an attentive eye to our critically-minded Marxist: perhaps we shall find that he has simply got things all muddled, following the notorious habit of Marx's other "critics".

The "intuition of common sense" says the following: "We have before us, according to Marx's strictly schematic hypothesis, the capitalist class, on one hand, and the class of proletarians, on the other. Where does technological progress lead to? It increases wealth in the possession of the capitalist class. Does it not stand to reason that, as a result of technological progress, the capitalists, who are spending wealth *whose value is falling*" (italics in the text—*G.P.*), "will be receiving *the same services*" (italics in the text—*G.P.*) "from the proletarians as before, and that, in consequence, the relation between the value of services and that of capital will change in favour of the former, i.e., that the rate of profit will increase. With the spending of wealth" (capital), "which was originally reproduced during five hours of work and is now reproduced in four hours, the workers continue to toil for the same ten hours. The previous proportion was five to ten; it is now four to ten. The sponge costs less, but it absorbs the same amount of water" (p. 257).

Let us imagine that we are dealing with a manufacturer at whose spinning mill a certain amount of cotton is turned into yarn every year. Let us further suppose that a breakthrough occurs in machine-spinning which *doubles* the spinner's *labour productivity*. How will this breakthrough affect the magnitude of the constant capital, i.e., of the sponge which, in Croce's words, absorbs the workers' living labour? Since the spinner's labour productivity *has doubled*, it is clear that at present *he will turn a double quantity of cotton* into yarn. That double quantity of cotton should be provided by the manufacturer to the worker, which means that the former's expenditures on raw material, with other conditions remaining the same, *will double* (disregarding any other additional expenditures). Hence it becomes clear that Signor Croce understood the importance of technological progress poorly when he asked himself: "How could Marx have imagined that the capitalist's expenditures always increase with technological progress?" (same page). In practice, however, it turns out that Marx not only could but should have imagined this.

But that is not all. The technological progress that doubled the spinner's labour productivity consisted in *improvements in machinery*. Improved machinery usually costs *more*—there you have another factor of higher expenditures for the capitalist, and fresh proof that Signor Croce was very naïve in asking himself: "How could Marx have", etc.

But Signor Croce goes on to object: "Capital ... is calculated, not in its physical volume but in its economic value. Economically, that capital (supposing all other conditions remain the same) should have less value, or otherwise there would have been no technological progress" (p. 258).

Here again our critic displays an extreme and almost moving naïveté. Technological progress *"should"* diminish the value of constant capital, or else there would be no technological progress—that is all Signor Croce has to say to refute Marx's law. But, alas, that is too little. Technological progress consists in higher labour productivity, i.e., in every given unit of the product embodying a lesser amount of labour than before. But it does not follow hence that commodities are now produced by less expensive machines. The reverse is true! Technological progress usually involves the use of more *complex* and consequently more *expensive* machinery. That is the case, not only in the sphere of *production* but also in the *circulation* of commodities. An ocean liner costs much more than a sailing vessel, though, with the development of ocean shipping, *freight charges* have fallen considerably. True, the existence of *counteracting causes* cannot be denied here. Marx gave a detailed list of them in his *Capital* (Vol. III, Part 1, p. 213 et seq. in the German edition).³¹⁹ Among them he included cheaper raw materials, machinery and other components of constant capital. "For instance," he says, "the quantity of cotton worked up by a single European spinner in a modern factory has grown tremendously compared to the quantity formerly worked up by a European spinner with a spinning-wheel. Yet the value of the worked-up cotton has not grown in the same proportion as its mass. The same applies to machinery and other fixed capital" (ibid., p. 217).³²⁰ "In isolated cases the mass of the elements of constant capital may even increase, while its value remains the same, or falls" (same page).³²¹ But that happens only in individual cases; on the whole, the value of constant capital increases, though not so rapidly as the mass of its elements. Any bright schoolboy knows that. But here are some interesting new facts. In the United States of America, the number of industrial enterprises (exclusive of mines) with annual productions of at least 500 dollars went up by 44 per cent during the decade between 1889/1890 and 1899/1900; the number of workers employed there rose by 25 per cent; the aggregate pay-roll grew by 23 per cent; the capital invested in these factories (the reference is obviously to what is known as *fixed* capital) increased by 51 per cent; and, finally, mixed expenditures increased by 63 per cent (see Franz's article "Aus den Vereinigten Staaten" in *Neue Zeit* of May 17, 1902). These figures show that constant capital grows more rapidly than variable capital in the United States. What is

to be seen there in terms of *time* is to be seen in Russia in *spatial terms*. *South Russia's* iron and steel industry is equipped far better than that of *the Urals*, for which reason *there is far more constant capital* per worker employed in the iron and steel industry of *the South than there is in the Urals*. That, I repeat, is known to any schoolboy. Yet, Signor Croce continues to ask: in that case, what sense is there in improved production methods? With his "critical" naïveté he does not even suspect that a more advanced and therefore (in most cases) a more expensive machine *shifts lower cost to each separate unit of the product than the less expensive one does*. Had he known this, he would have understood how ridiculous his "enlightened intuition of common sense" is, and how clumsy and helpless he is in his "criticism" of the law of the fall in the rate of profit. But he is ignorant of that and is therefore extremely pleased with his "criticism".

We have chosen this particular essay by Signor Croce because it confirms the truth of the French saying: *les beaux esprits se rencontrent*. It is common knowledge that in Russian literature Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky has used similar arguments to refute Marx's law.³²² That critic's argumentation has been excellently refuted by Mr. Karelin (in *Nauchnoye Obozreniye*³²³), while Mr. Tugan's reasoning was recently taken up for scrutiny by Kautsky in *Neue Zeit* on the occasion of the appearance of a German translation of Mr. Tugan's book on crises, which included his pseudo-refutation of Marx. Of course, we shall not repeat here the arguments of Karelin and Kautsky.*

We would just like to note that whenever two great minds make some great discovery, it is always of interest to decide the question of what scholarly Germans call *Priorität*. Who holds the "priority" in refuting Marx's law of the fall in the rate of profit: Signor Croce or Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky? What does the chronology say? Signor Croce's "critical" essay, which we are examining, first appeared in a scholarly Italian publication in *May 1899* (see the introduction to his book, p. 4, footnote); in the same month of the same year Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky "refuted" Marx in *Nau-*

* Kautsky, who showed that Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky's "criticism" was merely a return to the viewpoint of vulgar political economy, nevertheless, pays him quite a few compliments. To Kautsky's mind, Mr. Tugan is almost a most outstanding "critic". In fact, this writer possesses great diligence and a certain *descriptive* skill. However, as far as economic theory is concerned, he is dead to it, or as yet unborn. To us, the compliments he has received from Kautsky seem completely undeserved. We believe they can be explained by the same psychological aberration which makes socialists in each separate country think that the bourgeoisie of foreign countries are better than their own: Kautsky was excessively bored with the German "critics".

chnoye Obzreniye. It is evident that the priority belongs to neither of them: les beaux esprits (critiques) se sont rencontrés; but should you, dear reader, say that both these critical minds could borrow their "critical" idea from some third person, a still more "critical" economist, we would reply: *you are right*. Open *Verhandlungen der an 28 und 29 September 1894 in Wien abgehaltenen Generalversammlung des Vereins für Sozialpolitik über Kartelle und über das ländliche Erbrecht*, Leipzig, 1895, and you will find on page 218 the following words by Professor Julius Wolf, the notorious Sozialistenfresser:

"Professor Brentano's viewpoint that fixed capital increases as against circulating capital seems to be shared in many circles. Though in a slightly different wording, this viewpoint forms part of the socialist doctrine. I cannot agree with him, at least, not absolutely. Several weeks ago, a Zurich manufacturer, with whom I am on friendly terms, made some calculations on that score. He is a spinner himself, with a thorough knowledge of the history of spinning, especially in Britain, i.e., in the country where, for quite understandable reasons, Herr Brentano and the socialists gladly borrow material to back their arguments. This manufacturer has calculated that fixed capital is now lower in spinning than [before. Buildings, spindles and various machines have now become relatively less expensive; wages, on the other hand, have risen.... If so, the natural law (Naturgesetz) of economic development Herr Brentano makes reference to does not exist."

The Zurich manufacturer mentioned by Herr Wolf was evidently no one else but Friedrich Bertheau, who, *early in 1895*, published a booklet, *Fünf Briefe über Marx an Herrn Dr. Julius Wolf, Professor der Nationalökonomie in Zürich*, with an introduction by the selfsame Dr. Wolf. On pages 47-49 of this booklet the author cites figures designed to show that, in reality, it is not *constant* capital that has shown a relative increase but *variable* capital (note that Herr Bertheau uses Marx's terminology: *constant* and *variable* capital). As for the figures cited by Herr Bertheau, we can say that even if they really proved what he wanted, they *could not refute* Marx's law, which is backed by figures of far broader significance than those of the Zurich manufacturer: *even in this case, the best*, they could indicate that Britain's spinning industry belongs to those exceptions to the general rule that Marx himself referred to. But Herr Bertheau's figures do not contain even the slightest shadow of what he is out to prove with the frivolity in matters of theory typical of so many "people of practice". This can be easily seen by anybody who will go to the trouble of reading the above-mentioned excerpt from *Fünf Briefe über Marx*. We can refer those who are interested in learning in what direction

the ratio of constant capital to variable capital is proceeding in Britain's cotton industry to a book *Large-Scale Production*, etc., by Herr Schulze-Gävernitz, St. Petersburg, 1897. This book is, in its turn, full of misunderstandings, understatements, paralogisms and sophisms, but it contains some very instructive data on the problem we are dealing with.

Be it as it may, our beaux esprits have met in the field of ... *plagiarism*. Criticism, forsooth!

The above-cited arguments of the "intellectually original" Marxist give a very clear idea of his economic naïveté. But to make sure, here is another economic gem of his—after all, plenty is no plague.

In the essay "New Interpretations of the Marxist Theory of Value" we read:

"Marx constructed his own concept of value; he set forth the process of the transformation of *value* into *price*, and reduced the nature of profit to *surplus value*. To me, the entire problem of a criticism of Marxism boils down to the following: is Marx's concept basically wrong (wholly, if the premises are erroneous, or partly because of erroneous deductions)? Or else: if Marx's concept is basically correct, has it not been brought into a category it does not belong to; has something been asked of it that it does not give; with a failure also to recognise what it is in reality? After arriving at the second conclusion, I asked myself: in what conditions and with which hypotheses is Marx's theory *intelligible*?" (pp. 216-17).

To this clearly formulated question Signor Croce replies to himself as follows: "The concept of labour value holds true for an ideal society, in which the products of labour are the only benefits, and class distinctions are non-existent..." (p. 231). "Thus we shall have: 1) Anjeconomic producing society without class distinctions. The law of labour value. 2) A social division of classes. The origins of profit, which *solely in comparison with the preceding type and inasmuch as the concepts of the former are transferred to the latter* (Signor Croce's italics), can be qualified as surplus value. 3) The technological distinction between various industries, which necessitate a different composition of capital.... The appearance of the average rate of profit, which, *in comparison with the preceding type, can be regarded as transformed and equalised surplus value*" (p. 213, italics ours).

In the essay "On the Question of the Interpretation and Criticism of Certain Concepts of Marxism", in which the same question is examined, Signor Croce's idea is explained as follows:

"Marx's labour value is not a logical generalisation but a *fact thought of and taken as a type*, i.e., something quite distinct from a logical concept. It is not a pale abstraction, but has all the

richness of a concrete fact.* This concrete *fact* serves, in Marx's research, as a term of comparison, a measurement, a *type*" (p. 106).

Everything seems clear: labour value is merely a "fact thought of as a type", and it is only from the standpoint of such a "fact-type" that the name of surplus value can be applied to profit. Well, well, this is the way our extraordinary Marxist has understood the author of *Capital*. Does Marx ever "*call*" profit *surplus value*? Applying such a "name" to it means confusing those very concepts which have to be clarified. According to Marx, profit, *like interest or ground rent*, constitutes *part* of the value created by the workers' unpaid labour. But if that provides grounds to rename it as surplus value, we shall have to apply the same "name" to *interest and ground rent* as well. It is obvious that nothing good can be expected from such terminology. But all this is merely en passant. The main thing for us here is that, according to Marx, it is not at all in an imaginary "economic producing society without class distinctions" that profit constitutes part of the surplus value, but *in present-day capitalist society, which is an indisputable "empirical fact"*. This is something our "critically minded" Marxist does not understand. He is so imbued with the spirit of vulgar political economy that the question simply pops out of him: why should one designate as transformation of *surplus-value* something that is the natural economic outcome of capital, which (because it is capital) must produce profit? (p. 230). This is something beyond compare! After this, how can one discuss things with Signor Croce, or explain to him, that it was Marx's scientific purpose incidentally to prove *why* that "natural outcome of capital" which is called profit *is possible and where it comes from*; or present surplus value to him as the *source* of the "natural outcome"? All that will be in vain, a waste of time, the intellectually original Marxist will reply with invincible conviction that the existence of surplus value is possible only in an imaginary society *without* class divisions and that therefore linking surplus value with the source of profit—that *natural outcome of capital*—means revealing that lack of original thinking which, to their uttermost shame, marks the vulgar Marxists. Signor Benedetto Croce is evidently directly descended from the man in the fable by the Russian writer Ivan Krylov, who *failed to notice the elephant*. and does not see what stares him in the face.

Indeed, the offspring of that remarkable specimen of human nature are most numerous. They include all those "critics" of Marx who believe in the existence of a contradiction between

* In a footnote Signor Croce adds: "It should not be forgotten that a *concrete fact* need not be an empirical fact, but one which is purely hypothetical, i.e., existing only in part in an empirical reality."

Volumes One and Three of *Capital*. In a review of Mr. Frank's book *Marx's Theory of Value and Its Significance* (see Zarya, Nos. 2-3, p. 324 et seq.), we showed that, in reality, there is no contradiction between the two volumes, and that Volume Two—somehow quite forgotten in this case—contained unequivocal indications as to *how* Marx resolved the antinomy between the law of value, on the one hand, and the law of the equal rate of profit, on the other. In our review, we referred to pages 152 and 253 of Volume Two (in the Russian translation, these correspond to pages 185 and 315 of the second edition of the German original). Now let us refer to some more passages in the same volume. On page 79, Marx says that, under the capitalist method of calculating profit ... for capital in different spheres of investment, wherever the times of circulation are different, a longer time of circulation period tends to bring about an increase of prices, in short, *serves as one of the causes of equalising profits* (italics ours; the excerpt is on page 97 of the second edition of the German original).³²⁴ This is completely in the spirit of Volume Three. Further, the excerpt on p. 88 reads as follows: "All labour which adds value can also add surplus-value, and will always add surplus-value under capitalist production, as the value created by labour depends on the amount of the labour itself, whereas the surplus-value created by it depends on the extent to which the capitalist pays for it. Consequently, costs which enhance the price of a commodity without adding to its use-value, which therefore are to be classed as unproductive expenses so far as society is concerned, may be a source of enrichment to the individual capitalist" (p. 107 in the German original).³²⁵ The reader will realise that these unproductive expenses could not serve as a source of wealth for individual capitalists had not the surplus value extracted from the working class been distributed between employers proportionately to the capital of each of them. Finally, on p. 296, in posing the question of how the value of the capital consumed in production is replaced from the annual product, and how the movement of this replacement is absorbed by the consumption of surplus-value by the capitalists and of wages by the workers, Marx remarked that he was implying an exchange of products in accordance with their value, but made a highly significant reservation, which has been poorly translated into Russian, and which we shall first quote in the original: "So weit die Preise von den Werthen abweichen kann dieser Umstand ... auf die Bewegung des gesellschaftlichen Kapitals keinen Einfluss ausüben. Es tauschen sich nach wie vor im Ganzen dieselben Massen Produkten aus, obgleich die einzelnen Kapitalisten dabei in Werthverhältnissen betheiligt sind, die nicht mehr proportionell wären ihren respektiven Vorschüssen und den von jedem

von ihnen einzeln produzierten Mehrwerthmassen" (p. 368 of the second edition). What this means is: "The fact that prices diverge from values cannot, however, exert any influence on the movements of the social capital. On the whole, there is the same exchange of the same quantities of products, although the individual capitalists are involved in value-relations no longer proportional to their respective advances and to the quantities of surplus-value produced singly by every one of them."³²⁶ If, with prices diverging from values, the exchange of quantities of products remains the same, this makes it obvious, on the one hand, that *the aggregate sum of the values exchanged* will remain the same too. If the above-mentioned divergence does not influence the *movements* of the social capital, then, on the other hand, such divergence cannot change the nature of the *process of creation of that quantity of surplus-value which is absorbed by social capital and is distributed among individual capitalists*. Consequently, no matter how we reply to the question of the divergence between average prices from values—whether affirmatively or negatively—our reply *cannot affect* the solution of the question of *where social surplus value comes from*. Hence, it follows that *Volume Three of "Capital" could not contradict Volume One*, and that the "critics" have sought contradictions where none could exist, i.e., they have completely misunderstood Marx.

It was not so difficult, however, to understand him. If the "critics" have held the opinion that, according to Volume One, average commodity prices *coincide* with their values, they have done so of their own free will. As to Marx, he stressed, in the above-mentioned volume, that there is actually *no* such coincidence. For his part, Frederick Engels declared that the idea of such a coincidence was quite groundless. In objecting to Eugen Dühring, he remarked that Marx never claimed that the individual industrialist, in all and any circumstances, sells at its full value the surplus product received by him. "Marx says expressly that merchant's profit also forms a part of surplus-value, and on the assumptions made this is only possible when the manufacturer sells his product to the merchant *below* its value". (*Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*, 3. Auflage, S. 226).³²⁷ Later, referring to a passage in Volume One, Engels says: "Herr Dühring might see from this alone that *competition plays a leading part in the distribution of surplus-value*, and with some reflection the indications given in the first volume are in fact enough to make clear, at least in its main features, the transformation of surplus-value into its subforms" (Unterformen) (ibid., S. 228).³²⁸ The words we have italicised in themselves provide a clear instruction with regard to the *direction in which the solution of the celebrated "riddle" should have been sought*. When the selfsame Engels suggested in

the Preface to Volume Two that the riddle should be solved by scholars who held that Rodbertus's viewpoint was the hidden source of Marx's economic theory, it should have been perfectly clear to any man of understanding how matters stood. The reader should note that Engels addressed those very people who lauded Rodbertus as against Marx, *and them alone*. He invited them to show that, with the help of Rodbertus's economic theory, the riddle could be solved, *not only without any divergence from the law of value but rather on the basis of that law*. He made the suggestion simply and exclusively because they could not take it up without renouncing Rodbertus's economic theory. Anyone familiar with the latter's writings knows that, in his opinion, the law of value is far from predominant in capitalist society. It was this aspect of Rodbertus's view on value that Engels had in mind when he made his wily suggestion to Rodbertus's followers, which the "critics" understood as a guarantee that the coincidence of prices with values would be proved in Volume Three of *Capital*. It was a bad miscalculation, but responsibility for it lay with the critics, not with Volume Three or with Marx and Engels.

Consequently, Rodbertus's theory of value differs greatly from Marx's theory on the same subject. Indeed, it differs in the extreme, though the "critics" do not, of course, even suspect it. Rodbertus puts it as follows: if commodities are exchanged in proportion to the amount of labour spent on their production, the law of value is fully applicable; if not, the operation of this law seems to be cancelled. *Marx understood the question in a far broader way*, which is clear from Volume One of *Capital* and is shown even better in one of his letters to Kugelmann published recently in *Neue Zeit*. We are referring to the letter of July 11, 1868 in which Marx says: "As for the *Centralblatt*, the man is making the greatest possible concession in admitting that, if one means anything at all by value, the conclusions I draw must be accepted. The unfortunate fellow does not see that, even if there were no chapter on 'value' in my book, the analysis of the real relations which I give would contain the proof and demonstration of the real value relations. All that palaver about the necessity of proving the concept of value comes from complete ignorance both of the subject dealt with and of scientific method. Every child knows that a nation which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but even for a few weeks, would perish. Every child knows, too, that the volume of products corresponding to the different needs requires different and quantitatively determined amounts of the total labour of society (der gesellschaftlichen Gesamtarbeit). That this *necessity* of the *distribution* of social labour in definite proportions cannot possibly be done away with by a *particular form* of social production but can only change the *mode* of its

appearance, is self-evident. Natural laws cannot be abolished at all. What can change in historically different circumstances is only the form in which these laws assert themselves. And the form in which this proportional distribution of labour asserts itself, in a social system where the interconnection of social labour manifests itself through the *private exchange* of individual products of labour, is precisely the *exchange value* of these products. Science consists precisely in demonstrating *how* (in the original: zu entwickeln—to develop) the law of value asserts itself. So that if one wanted at the very beginning to ‘explain’ all the phenomena which seemingly contradict that law, one would have to present the science before science. It is precisely Ricardo’s mistake that in his first chapter on value he takes *as given* a variety of categories that have not yet been explained in order to prove their conformity with the law of value.... The vulgar economist has not the faintest idea that the actual everyday exchange relations can *not be directly identical* with the magnitudes of value. The essence (der Witz) of bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that a priori there is no conscious social regulation of production. The rational and naturally necessary asserts itself only as a blindly working average. And then the vulgar economist thinks he has made a great discovery when, in face of the disclosure of intrinsic interconnection, he proudly states that on the surface things look different. In fact, he boasts that he sticks to appearance, and takes it for the ultimate. Why, then, have any science at all?”³²⁹

Exchange value is a form assumed by the operation of the law of value, a mode of operation of that law. It is no more than an *historical category*. But while the above-mentioned law’s *mode of operation* changes together with social relations, the *operation* itself is just as ineradicable as the operation of the eternal laws of Nature. Therefore, if we see that the *mode of operation changes or becomes more complex* for one reason or another, say, because of competition between capitalists that does not mean that the *operation itself* ends, or is eliminated at least partially. No, while manifesting itself differently, or intertwining with the operation of another law, *it still remains in full force*, and it is the researcher’s task to follow it up through a multitude of new forms and intertwinings. Marx accomplished that task in his *Capital*. As to Rodbertus, he *not only failed to solve it*, but considered its solution impossible. In his words, one of Marx’s mistakes was that “er nimmt den Arbeitswerth aller Güter schon in dem heutigen Zustande als realisiert an, während dies nur durch Gesetze geschehen kann” (see his letter to R. Meyer of September 8, 1871 published in his *Briefe und sozial-politische Aufsätze*, Vol. I, pp. 99-100. Italics ours). For Rodbertus, the entire law of value consisted

in the exchange relations of commodities being determined by the amount of labour spent on the production of each of them. In other words, Rodbertus confused the operation of the law with one of the modes ("forms") of its operation determined in each particular period by society's economic structure. The same error is repeated by all who think that in Volume Three of *Capital* Marx discarded his theory of value. But enough of that. The reader can see for himself how far removed Marx's idea is from what is ascribed to him by Signor Croce with his "fact thought of and taken as a type".

To criticise Marx, or any other thinker, one should *understand* him. That is the crux of the matter, and it makes itself unpleasantly felt almost on every page of Signor Croce's critical essays. He has failed to understand Marx's economic theory, or his historical theory. We have no space for long excerpts here, so we shall confine ourselves to one statement alone. After praising Antonio Labriola, incidentally for the fact that in his book on the materialistic explanation of history he "*allows*" of the existence of ideology, and even "the frequently occurring absence in him of a consciousness and understanding of his position", Signor Croce adds: "Since man lives not only in society but also in Nature, Labriola recognises the force of race, temperament, and" (!) "the promptings of Nature. Finally, he does not close his eyes to human personality, that is to say, the actions of those who are called great men and who, if not creators, are certainly collaborators of history" (pp. 29-30). Signor Croce calls all this *concessions* (p. 30). The term will probably be approved of by the celebrated Professor Kareyev, but the "vulgar" Marxists will reply with derisive laughter. Let Signor Croce give good thought to Marx's theory of history; he will then see that, *far from precluding the "promptings of Nature", it simply assumes their existence* (as will be seen, for instance, from Volume One of *Capital*). In exactly the same way, it has never occurred to any serious Marxist to deny the "actions of great men", but it is doubtful whether any of them regards the latter as "collaborators" of history. The idea associated with the word consists in great people working *together* with or *alongside* of history—a patent absurdity, at least for our fraternity of "vulgar" Marxists.* Equally obvious to us is the old truth that people are not always aware of their condition in life. After all, our activities are all directed primarily towards developing the *consciousness* of the proletariat. To see any "concession" here means behaving like one who has failed to notice what stares him in the face.

* On the question of the role of so-called great and highly placed men, see our article in the collection of essays *Twenty Years*.³³⁰

We shall not discuss Labriola's other "concessions", which have already been dealt with in Russian literature (see Kamensky's article in *Novoye Slovo*³³¹).

After everything that has been said, the "vulgar" Marxists will not be surprised to learn that our intellectually original Marxist belongs to the category of the forthright opponents of *the dialectical method and of materialism*. Naturally, he has not the slightest notion of either. Without feeling a shadow of doubt, he repeats the opinion that *philosophical materialism consists in a recognition of spiritual phenomena being merely an unreal semblance, behind which physical phenomena lie concealed* (p. 190). Such patent absurdities deserve no refutation, which is why we shall leave unanswered the rebuke made against us personally, namely that, in our *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus* we voiced "the need to go back to Holbach and Helvetius" (pp. 19-20). We returned to Holbach and Helvetius in the sense that we considered it necessary to compare Marx's materialism with French eighteenth-century materialism and discover kinship and genetic links between these two phases in the history of the materialistic world-outlook. Had not Signor Croce been blinded by the usual philistine prejudices against materialism, and had he understood Marx's views, he would have found strange, not that we felt a need of that comparison but its not having been expressed far earlier in philosophical literature.

Of himself Signor Croce says that he has not "escaped from the power of Kant's critique" (p. 175), in ethical questions. We shall add that "Kant's critique" has made a deep and indelible impress on *all* his world-outlook. Therein lies the secret of his own "critical" exercises. He senses that *Kantianism* is incompatible with Marx's historical and socio-political views, which are imbued through and through with the spirit of *materialism*. But instead of decisively rejecting Kantianism or completely turning away from Marxism, he tries to sit between two stools by trying to modify Marxism to make it finally cease from contradicting what it *cannot but contradict*. With him, as with many others, this assiduous but quite unproductive labour is adorned with the label of *criticism*. Hardly has there ever existed, in the history of human thought, a name less suited to what it should indicate.

Thus, Signor Croce's book is a poor gift to the Russian reader. It is all the worse for Mr. P. Shutyakov having produced a *very poor* translation. For example, we read on p. 132 of his translation that Marx's historical theory is nothing more but a *canon*, a manual of historical interpretation, and that the "manual counsels concentration on society's economic essence, for a better understanding of its configuration and changes". What is *society's economic essence*? We turn to the original and find (p. 115): Sostrato

economico della società, i.e., *society's economic substratum*. This does not precisely convey Marx's view either, but at least makes some sense, while "*economic essence*" is sheer nonsense. The footnote on page 61 says: "On the whole, the form of value pursued by Marx is an *equation between two concrete values*." What does "*to pursue*" a form of value mean? And what is an "*equation*" between values? The Italian original (p. 53) says: "La concezione del valore nel *Capital* del Marx ... e insomma il paragone fra due valori concreti", i.e., "in a word, the definition of value in Marx's *Capital* is a comparison between two concrete values". *Theoretically*, as we already know, this is incorrect, but there is no "*pursuit*" or "*equation*" here, which raises Signor Croce's error to the power of two. Mr. P. Shutyakov's translation contains quite a few such blunders.

KARL MARX

The thirty-fifth issue of *Iskra* appears on the twentieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, to whom it has devoted most of its space.

If it is true that the proletariat's great international movement was the most remarkable social phenomenon of the nineteenth century, it should be recognised that the founder of the International Working Men's Association³³² was the most outstanding man of that century. At once fighter and thinker, he not only organised the first forces of the international army of industrial workers, but, together with his unswerving friend Frederick Engels, forged the mighty spiritual weapon with which that army has already inflicted so many telling defeats on the enemy, and will eventually bring it complete victory. We owe it to Karl Marx that socialism has become a science. If politically conscious proletarians are now fully aware that a social revolution is necessary for the complete emancipation of the working class, and that the revolution should be the concern of the working class itself; if they are now uncompromising and indefatigable enemies of the bourgeois order, that stems from the influence of scientific socialism. From the viewpoint of "practical reason", scientific socialism differs from the utopian in its having decisively exposed the basic contradictions of capitalist society and ruthlessly shown up the naive futility of all plans of social reform—sometimes most ingenious and always well-intentioned—advanced by utopian socialists of different schools as the best means of doing away with the class struggle and reconciling the proletariat with the bourgeoisie. The present-day proletarian, who has learnt the theory of scientific socialism and remains true to its spirit, cannot but be revolutionary both logically and emotionally, i.e., cannot but belong to the most "dangerous" variety of revolutionaries.

To Marx fell the signal honour of becoming the nineteenth-century socialist best hated by the bourgeoisie. At the same time,

he had the enviable good fortune of becoming the most venerated teacher of the proletariat of the times. As he became the focus of the exploiters' malice, his name acquired ever greater esteem with the exploited. Today, in the early years of the twentieth century, politically conscious proletarians throughout the world see him as their teacher, and take pride in him as one of the most universal and profound minds, as one of the most noble and selfless personalities known in history.

"The saint in whose memory May 1 is celebrated is called Karl Marx," said a bourgeois Vienna newspaper in late April 1890. Indeed, the annual May 1st demonstration of the workers of the world provides grand if unpremeditated homage to the memory of this genius, whose programme blended in a coherent whole the workers' day-to-day struggle for better terms of sale for their labour power and the revolutionary struggle against the existing economic system. However, this homage has nothing in common with religious festivals; the homage paid by the present-day proletariat to its "saints" is the greater, the greater the latter's efforts have helped bring nearer the happy time when liberated mankind will build its kingdom of heaven on earth, leaving the heavens to the angels and the birds....³³³

Among the spiteful absurdities spread about Marx is the concoction that the author of *Capital* was hostile towards Russians. In fact, he hated Russian tsarism, which always played the vile role of international gendarme, ready to crush any liberation movement wherever it had begun.

Marx took the keenest interest in all serious manifestations of internal development in Russia and—what is most important—had a thorough grip of the subject rarely to be met among West European contemporaries. In his reminiscences of Marx, a German worker, Lessner by name, tells of how Marx was overjoyed at the appearance of the Russian translation of *Capital*, and how pleasant it was for him to believe that people were appearing in Russia capable of understanding and disseminating the ideas of scientific socialism. From the Preface to the Russian translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which he and Engels signed, we learn that his sympathy with the Russian revolutionaries and his impatient desire to see them victorious even led him to considerably overestimate our revolutionary movement of the time. The hearty welcome offered to Russian exiles at Marx's hospitable home* is exemplified by his attitude towards Lopatin and Hartman. His differences with Herzen were caused partly by a chance misunderstanding, and partly by his well-deserved

* The selfsame worker Lessner said that Marx's house "was always open to all trustworthy friends".

mistrust of Slavophile socialism, whose herald in West European literature our brilliant fellow-countryman regrettably became under the influence of the bitter disappointments of 1848-51. Marx's scathing criticism of Slavophile socialism, expressed in the first edition of Volume I of *Capital*, deserves praise, not censure, particularly today when that brand of socialism is reviving in our country in the shape of the programme of the party that calls itself socialist-revolutionary.³³⁴ Last, Marx's bitter struggle against Bakunin in the International Working Men's Association had nothing to do with that anarchist's Russian origin, and stemmed from the irreconcilable oppositeness of the two men's views.* When the publications of the Emancipation of Labour group³³⁵ began for the first time to spread Social-Democratic ideas among Russian revolutionaries, Engels, in a letter to Vera Zasulich,³³⁶ expressed regret that this had not happened in the lifetime of Marx who, as he put it, would have rejoiced at the group's literary undertaking. And what would the great author of *Capital* have said, had he lived to see how numerous is his following among the Russian workers? What joy would have filled his heart if he had heard of events such as recently took place in Rostov-on-Don!³³⁷ In his time, a Russian Marxist was a rarity, and Russian progressives regarded such a rarity at best with a smile of good-natured pity; today Marx's ideas are predominant in the Russian revolutionary movement; those Russian revolutionaries who, out of habit, reject them all or in part—such people, despite their often vociferous revolutionary phrase-mongering, long ago ceased in fact from being progressive and, unaware of the fact, have joined the vast camp of the retrogrades.

Many a simile has also been said and repeated about Marx's frequent polemical clashes with his opponents. Some peaceable but unperceptive people ascribed such clashes to what they called his irrepressible contentiousness, which allegedly stemmed from his cantankerous nature. In fact, the almost incessant literary struggle he was obliged to wage, particularly at the outset of his social activities, was brought about, not by his nature but by the social significance of the idea he defended. He was one of the first socialists to wholly take up the position of the class

* In his *Essays on the Modern History of Political Economy* (Russ. ed., p. 294) M. Tugan-Baranovsky, formerly a "Marxist" and now a vulgar Economist, has repeated the anarchists' gossip that Marx helped spread libel against Bakunin. This is not the place to analyse the arguments used to bolster such fabrications; we shall deal with them in more detail in *Zarya*, where the thoughtless work of Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky's will be given the assessment it deserves. However, it should be noted that our former "Marxist" has made no effort to critically appraise his sources. He has repeated the accusation without adducing any proof, this, in its turn, turning his statement into libel.

struggle in theory and practice, and to separate the proletariat's interests from those of the petty bourgeoisie. It is therefore not surprising that he often had to clash with theorists of petty-bourgeois socialism who were so numerous at the time, especially among German "intellectuals". To discontinue his polemic with such theorists would have meant abandoning the idea of uniting the proletariat in a party of its own, one with its own historical goal, but not dragging at the tail of the petty bourgeoisie. "Our task," Marx's journal *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* said in April 1850, "consists in a ruthless criticism directed even more at our false friends than our open enemies; in assuming that stand, we take pleasure in rejecting any cheap democratic popularity." Open enemies were less dangerous because they were no longer able to blunt the class-consciousness of the proletarians, whereas petty-bourgeois socialists, with their "classless" programmes, were still influencing very many workers. The struggle against them was inevitable, and Marx waged it with the inimitable skill so characteristic of him. His example should not be forgotten by us, Russian Social-Democrats, who have to work under conditions very similar to those that existed in pre-revolutionary Germany. Surrounded as we are, on all sides, by petty-bourgeois theorists of a specifically "Russian socialism", we must firmly remember that the proletariat's interests also oblige us to ruthlessly criticise our false friends—for example, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries", who are well known to our readers. We must do that regardless of the indignation our unsparing criticism may evoke among those good-natured but unperceptive friends of peace and concord among various revolutionary "factions".

Marx's theory is today's "algebra of revolution". An understanding of it is essential to all those who want to wage a conscious struggle against the existing order of things in our country. This is so true that there was a time when even many ideologists of the Russian bourgeoisie felt an urge to become Marxists. Marx's ideas were indispensable to them in their struggle against the ante-diluvian theories of Narodism, which so sharply contradicted the new economic relations in Russia. This was well realised by those young bourgeois ideologists who were acquainted better than others with modern social science literature. They rallied under the banner of Marxism, and, fighting under that banner, won a measure of fame. But when the Narodniks were routed and their antiquated theories turned into so much rubble, our new-fangled Marxists decided that Marxism had done its job, and that the time had come to subject it to severe criticism. That "criticism" was carried out on the pretext that social thinking had *to advance*; however, its only outcome was that our recent allies moved *backward* and took up the theoretical stand of the West-European

bourgeois of a social-reformist hue. No matter how miserable the outcome of that loudly trumpeted "critical" crusade, or how painful it was to Russian Social-Democrats to behold the "critical" transformations of those they had only recently fought jointly with against the common foe and had hoped eventually to draw close to themselves, they had, on reflection, to recognise that our neo-Marxists' retreat to the "Holy Mount" of bourgeois reformism was not only quite natural but was also indirect confirmation of the correctness of the materialist understanding of history Marx had evolved. In 1895-96, Marxism appealed to people who, in their social standing, mentality or moral qualities, had nothing in common either with the proletariat or with its liberation struggle. There was a time when Marxism was the vogue at every St. Petersburg chancery. Had such a situation persisted, it would have proved that the founders of scientific socialism were mistaken in stating that a mode of *thought* hinges on the way of *life*, and that the upper classes cannot become bearers of the ideas of social revolution of our times. But the "criticism" of Marx that began right after the struggle against the reactionary aspirations of Narodism had ended, once again proved that Marx and Engels were right: the "critics'" mode of thinking was determined by their social status; in rebelling against the "fanaticism of dogma", they had in fact risen up only against the socio-revolutionary content of Marx's theory. They stood in no need of a Marx who, throughout a lifetime of unremitting toil, struggle and hardship, was so full of a sacred hatred of capitalist exploitation. Marx, the leader of the revolutionary *proletariat*, seemed to them indecent and "unscientific". They needed *only* that Marx who, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, declared he was ready to support the bourgeoisie inasmuch as it was revolutionary in its struggle against the absolute monarchy and petty-bourgeois philistinism. They were interested solely in the *democratic* half of Marx's socio-democratic programme. That was most natural, but it was our critics' perfectly natural aspirations which made obvious the utter groundlessness of counting on them as socialists. Their place is in the ranks of the liberal opposition, to whom they have given a careful, zealous and able literary spokesman in the person of Mr. Struve, editor of *Osvobozhdeniye*.³³⁸

The Marxist theory has stood up to the test of time, and that not only in Russia. It is common knowledge that Western scholars long looked askance at it as the benighted offspring of socio-revolutionary fanaticism, but with the passage of time it became ever clearer, even to those who saw things through the prism of bourgeois narrow-mindedness, that the offspring of socio-revolutionary fanaticism had at least one unquestionable advantage: its providing a highly effective method for research into social life.

The greater the progress in studies of primitive culture, history, law, literature and art, the closer scholars approached to historical materialism,* although the vast majority of them either knew nothing of Marx's historical theory or dreaded his materialist views, which, to the present-day bourgeoisie, seem immoral and dangerous to the peace of society. So we see that the materialist explanation of history is making headway in the world of scholarship. The recently published *Economic Explanation of History* by the American Professor Zeligman shows that the high priests of official science are gradually growing aware of the great scientific significance of Marx's theory of history. Incidentally, Zeligman has helped us realise the psychological reasons that have till now hampered a correct recognition and understanding of that theory in the bourgeois world of science. He frankly admits that scientists have been scared by Marx's socialist conclusions, and he tries to make his colleagues see that these socialist considerations can be discarded, while the historical theory underlying them can be accepted. This ingenious device, which, incidentally, has been quite clearly if timidly employed in Mr. P. Struve's *Critical Notes*, is fresh proof of the old adage that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for an ideologist of the bourgeoisie to go over to the viewpoint of the proletariat. Marx was a revolutionary through and through. He rebelled against the God of Capital, just as Goethe's Prometheus rose up against Zeus. And, like Prometheus, he could say of himself that it was his task to educate people who, while capable of experiencing human suffering and human joys, would eschew the worship of an idol so hostile to men. And it is that idol whom the bourgeois ideologists serve. It is their task to defend its privileges with their ideological weapon, just as the police and the army support them with their truncheons and firearms. No theory can win recognition from bourgeois scientists unless it can be shown to be harmless to the God of Capital. Scholars in France and the Franco-phone countries in general are more outspoken in this respect than all the rest. For example, the noted historian Lavallée said that the science of economics should be rebuilt anew, because it no longer lived up to its mission after the frivolous Bastiat had compromised the defence of the existing order. And quite recently Auguste Bechaux, in a book dealing with the French school of political economy, was barefaced enough to appraise various economic doctrines from the viewpoint: which of them "can produce the most effective weapon to combat socialism with". Hence it is clear

* Of the more recent writers we shall mention Bücher, von der Steinen, Hildebrandt, Espinas, Hoernes, Feuergerd, Grosse, Ciccotti, and the entire school of American ethnologists.

that the ideologists of the bourgeoisie, even when they take up Marx's ideas, will always remain "critical" of the latter. The measure of their "critical" attitude towards Marx is the degree of the distance between the views of this uncompromising and indefatigable revolutionary and the interests of the ruling class. It is also clear that the consistently thinking bourgeois scholars will sooner recognise the validity of Marx's ideas on history than that of his economic theory: historical materialism can be neutralised with greater ease than, for example, his theory of surplus-value. The latter, which a prominent bourgeois "critic" of Marx has very aptly called the theory of exploitation, will always retain a reputation of unsoundness among educated and learned sections of the bourgeoisie. Such learned and educated bourgeois of our times prefer a "subjectivist" economic theory to Marx's economic theory, because the former very conveniently considers the phenomena of society's economic life quite outside the context of their link with the production relations in which the bourgeoisie's exploitation of the proletariat is rooted—a fact it is awkward to bring up now when the workers' class-consciousness is making such rapid progress.

Marx's economic, historical and philosophical ideas can be accepted in the formidable entirety of their revolutionary content only by ideologists of the proletariat, whose class interests are linked with the social revolution—the elimination of the capitalist system—not with its preservation.

NOTES AND INDEXES

NOTES

ESSAYS ON THE HISTORY OF MATERIALISM

Plekhanov envisaged his *Essays* as a series of articles for *Neue Zeit*, theoretical organ of the German Social-Democrats, already in 1892. The writing took him eighteen months, the work being completed towards the end of 1893.

In May 1893 Karl Kautsky, the editor of *Neue Zeit*, thanked Plekhanov for his article on Holbach; but two months later, on July 19, 1893, on receiving the article on Helvetius and expecting an article on Marx, Kautsky wrote a letter to Plekhanov in which he expressed his doubt as to the possibility of publishing these essays in *Neue Zeit* because they were too long; he suggested that they should be published as a separate book. Kautsky's letter of January 27, 1894 testifies to his having received Plekhanov's last essay on Marx. The *Essays* were published then neither in *Neue Zeit* nor separately. Only in 1896 did they appear in book form in Stuttgart, under the title *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Materialismus. I. Holbach. II. Helvetius. III. Marx*. The Preface, written by Plekhanov especially for their publication, was signed: "New Year's Day, 1896." In 1903, a second German edition was put out by the same publishers. The book did not appear in Russian in Plekhanov's lifetime.

- ¹ Friedrich Lange's book *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart* (History of Materialism and Criticism of Its Significance at the Present Time), which appeared in 1866, was an attempt at criticising materialism from neo-Kantian standpoint.

Jules Soury's *Breviaire de l'histoire du materialisme* (Handbook on the History of Materialism), published in Paris in 1883, was a similar attempt.

- ² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Moscow, 1974, Vol. I, p. 29. p. 32
- ³ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 345, 346. Plekhanov cites this passage in his own translation. p. 36
- ⁴ Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason) appeared in 1781. p. 41
- ⁵ *Lampe*—Kant's servant; here an embodiment of German petty-bourgeois philistinism. Plekhanov had in mind the ironical criticism to which Heine subjected the contradictions in Kant's theory explaining them by the spirit of philistinism which permeated Kant's philosophy too. After refuting the possibility to prove God's existence (in his *Critique of Pure Reason*), Kant, Heine believed, felt sorry for his poor *Lampe* and, to make the latter happy, returned to proving the existence of God (in his *Critique of Practical Reason*). p. 42

- ⁶ For Hegel's criticism of Kant's teaching on the "thing-in-itself" see his work *Science of Logic*. The criticism is incomplete, as it is given from an idealist point of view. p. 42
- ⁷ Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland. Ein Winter Märchen*. p. 46
- ⁸ *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique* (Literary, Philosophical and Critical Correspondence)—a magazine circulated in Paris in manuscript form (15 or 16 copies) from 1753 to 1792. It was issued by Friedrich Grimm, a prominent Encyclopedist, man of letters and diplomat. The magazine was sent to outstanding personalities and the authorities of the time. Scientific, literary and other problems were discussed in its pages. *Correspondance* appeared in book form in 1812. p. 46
- ⁹ From Heinrich Heine's poem, *Deutschland. Ein Winter Märchen*. p. 46
- ¹⁰ *Patriarch of Ferney*—Voltaire. The epithet was derived from the name of his estate near Geneva, where Voltaire spent more than twenty years of his life. p. 46
- ¹¹ *The age of Phaedra and Misanthrope*—the seventeenth century, the age of great French dramatists Jean Racine, the author of the tragedy *Phaedra* (1677), and Jean-Baptiste Molière, the author of *Le Misanthrope* (1666). p. 48
- ¹² *Socrates*, who was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his struggle against the Athenian democracy, made no attempt to escape from prison, despite his friends' entreaties, and took poison.
The Roman general *Marcus Atilius Regulus* (3rd cent. B. C.), captured by the Carthaginians in the 1st Punic War, was said to have been sent to Rome to negotiate peace and an exchange of prisoners of war. But on arriving in Rome, he ardently advised the Senate against accepting the Carthaginian terms. Then, as he did not want to break his word, he returned to Carthage, where he was tortured to death. p. 48
- ¹³ The *Jansenists*, named after the Dutch Roman Catholic theologian Jansenius—represented the oppositional trend among the French Catholics in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, expressing discontent in part of the French bourgeoisie with the feudal ideology of official Catholicism. p. 49
- ¹⁴ Words by Mephistopheles from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 50
- ¹⁵ *Capucnades*—commonplace and banal moral admonitions, derived from the name of the order of Capuchines. p. 50
- ¹⁶ *Le philosophe ignorant*—a philosophical treatise by Voltaire (1766) devoted to the problem of knowledge. It was Condorcet who wrote notes to the Kehl edition of Voltaire's *Works*. p. 53
- ¹⁷ The reference is to the following passage in Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès's *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?* published on the eve of the French Revolution in 1789: "What is the Third Estate? Everything.—What was it until now in the political respect? Nothing.—What is it striving for? To be something." p. 55
- ¹⁸ *Physiocrats*—a trend in bourgeois classical political economy which arose in the 1750s in France. The Physiocrats were staunch advocates of large-scale capitalist agriculture, and the abolition of class privileges and protectionism. They realised the necessity of doing away with the feudal system but wanted to bring this about through peaceful reforms, without any detriment to the ruling classes and absolutism. In their philosophical views they were close to the French eighteenth-century bourgeois Enlighteners. p. 57

- ¹⁹ Plekhanov has in mind a series of scandalous exposures of large-scale swindling and shady transactions on the part of bourgeois businessmen, bribed members of parliament and the venal press.

In France it was the bankruptcy (1888) of a company that started to build the Panama canal that led to "Panama" trial, which disclosed venality of a number of ministers, senators, deputies, the press and so on. The term "Panama" became a common word denoting large-scale swindling and shady transactions.

In Germany it was the "affair" of the "railway king" Strussberg which ended in a bankruptcy of a number of banks in various countries (1875).

In Italy it was the shady transactions of the owners of the Bank of Rome, who together with a group of ministers and other statesmen made profits at the expense of their clients, the latter becoming utterly ruined after the bank had collapsed (1893). p. 59

- ²⁰ When, at one of the first sessions of the States General, representatives of the nobility and clergy alluded to the historical right of conquest being the basis of their privileges, the bourgeois theorist abbé Emmanuel Sieyès proudly answered them:

"Rien que cela, Messieurs? Nous serons conquérants à notre tour."
(And is that all, gentlemen? We shall become conquerors in our turn.) p. 62

- ²¹ On June 20, 1789, representatives of the third estate gathered in a hall for ball games in one of the palaces of Versailles, proclaimed themselves the French National Assembly and swore not to leave the hall until a Constitution was drawn up. p. 62

- ²² On August 10, 1792 the French monarchy was abolished as a result of a popular uprising. The masses took the royal Tuileries palace by assault and compelled the Legislative Assembly to abolish the royal authority. The king was arrested and imprisoned. p. 63

- ²³ *Westernisers and Slavophiles*—two trends in Russian social thought of the mid-nineteenth century.

The *Westernisers* held that Russia would follow the same way of development as Western Europe (hence the name) and would go through the capitalist stage. They stressed the progressive role of the bourgeoisie, their political ideal being the constitutional-monarchical, bourgeois-parliamentary states of Western Europe, in particular, Britain and France. Their attitude towards serfdom was negative, their Left wing (Herzen, Ogaryov, partially Belinsky) sharing the views of utopian socialists.

The *Slavophiles* put forward the "theory" of the special and exceptional road of Russia's historical development on the basis of the communal system and Orthodoxy as inherent only in the Slavs. They were radically opposed to the revolutionary movement in Russia and in the West as well, as they maintained that Russia's historical development precluded any possibility of revolutionary upheavals. While advocating the perpetuation of the autocracy, the Slavophiles thought that a monarch should not ignore public opinion, and proposed the convening of a Zemsky Sobor consisting of elected representatives of all sections of society. However, they were against any constitution and formal restriction of the autocracy. By the end of the fifties and the early sixties, both trends drew closer together on the ground of a common liberal bourgeois ideology. p. 65

- ²⁴ By contumacious Slavophiles Plekhanov meant the Populists (Narodniks), who maintained that Russia could attain socialism, by-passing the capitalist way of development. They considered the peasant commune an embryo of socialism. p. 65

- ²⁵ Trying to win popularity, William II declared shortly before the Reichstag elections in February 1890 that he stood for legislative limitation of working hours; he issued edicts on preparations for a state conference on the labour question and for an international conference on labour legislation. p. 66
- ²⁶ In the theatre of antiquity the tragic denouement was sometimes achieved by the interference of God who made an appearance with the aid of stage machinery (*deus ex machina*). p. 66
- ²⁷ To illustrate his theory, Condillac in his main work *Traite des sensations* (1754) used the image of a statue. Endowing it consecutively with sensations, the philosopher showed that the statue, together with these sensations, acquired all mental and intellectual functions. p. 73
- ²⁸ Actually it was Marquise Dudefin who said so; she also, like de Bouffler, held a celebrated literary salon. p. 78
- ²⁹ *Frau Buchholtz*—a character from a series of novels by the mid-nineteenth century German humourist Stinde; an embodiment of Prussian philistinism. p. 79
- ³⁰ *The League* (the Catholic League)—a reactionary union of French Catholics founded in 1576 to combat the Protestants (Huguenots) during the Wars of Religion in the sixteenth century.
The Fronde—a movement of nobles and bourgeois against absolutism in France (1648-53). p. 101
- ³¹ The famous English soldier and statesman John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), was compelled to leave court; following the intrigues and quarrels of his wife, who was in attendance on Queen Anne. Voltaire ascribed Marlborough's downfall to an episode connected with a pair of gloves. p. 115
- ³² *Term* (*Terminus*, Roman myth.)—god, protector of boundaries, worshipped in the form of a milestone or a milepost. Every milestone was considered sacred, and anyone who moved it was accursed. p. 116
- ³³ By "great princes" Helvetius meant Catherine II of Russia and the Prussian King Frederick II, who assumed the roles of the "enlightened" monarchs—patrons of science and philosophy. La Mettrie and Voltaire lived at the court of Frederick II; Catherine II corresponded with Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, and invited Diderot, d'Alembert, etc., to St. Petersburg. p. 119
- ³⁴ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, pp. 57-58. p. 130
- ³⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, pp. 58-59. p. 131
- ³⁶ See present edition, Vol. I, pp. 401-26. p. 133
- ³⁷ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 86. p. 136
- ³⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Moscow, 1974, Vol. I, p. 29. p. 136
- ³⁹ This refers to the period of the restoration of the Bourbons (1814-30) interrupted by Napoleon's Hundred Days (1815). p. 137
- ⁴⁰ Plekhanov did not write a special essay on Saint-Simon though he devoted several pages to the latter in his articles "Utopian Socialism in the Nineteenth Century" and "French Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century". (See Vol. III of the present edition.) p. 139

- ⁴¹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 20-21. p. 141
- ⁴² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, pp. 173, 175. p. 143
- ⁴³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 175. p. 143
- ⁴⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 175. p. 144
- ⁴⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 352. p. 144
- ⁴⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 481. p. 147
- ⁴⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 481. p. 147
- ⁴⁸ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 153
- ⁴⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 13. p. 161
- ⁵⁰ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 23. p. 166
- ⁵¹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 57. p. 167
- ⁵² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 369. p. 168
- ⁵³ The reference is to the suppression of the June 1848 insurrection of workers in Paris and of the Paris Commune in May 1871. p. 169
- ⁵⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 421. p. 170
- ⁵⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 423-24. p. 171
- ⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, pp. 671-85. p. 172
- ⁵⁷ *Bachelor of arts from Salamanca*—a character from Voltaire's philosophical story *Histoire de Jenni ou l'athée et le sage*. p. 173
- ⁵⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 332. p. 174
- ⁵⁹ The reference is to Russia's defeat in the Crimean War of 1853-56 which showed the rottenness and impotence of the serf-owning system in the country and made its government abolish serfdom and carry out a series of reforms in the 1860s-70s, these hastening Russia's bourgeois development. p. 174
- ⁶⁰ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 178
- ⁶¹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 21-22. p. 179
- ⁶² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 86. p. 179
- ⁶³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 180
- ⁶⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 111-12. p. 181
- ⁶⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 121, 122. p. 181
- ⁶⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 118. p. 182

- ⁶⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 137. p. 182
- ⁶⁸ *Christian necessarians*—a Christian sect which maintained that the will is not free and that moral creatures do not act freely but according to necessity. p. 182

A FEW WORDS IN DEFENCE OF ECONOMIC MATERIALISM

This is a reply to the article "On Economic Materialism" the bourgeois liberal V. A. Goltsev published in the April issue of the journal *Russkaya Mysl* for 1896.

Plekhanov's article appeared in the same year in issue No. 9 of the journal with a subtitle "An Open Letter to V. A. Goltsev" under the pen-name of S. Ushakov.

In angular brackets are Plekhanov's notes and insertions in an extant copy of the journal.

- ⁶⁹ *Russkaya Mysl* (Russian Thought)—a monthly literary-political journal published in Moscow from 1880 to 1918; until 1905 it followed a liberal Narodnik trend. Articles by Marxists appeared in it in the 1890s. p. 183
- ⁷⁰ See present edition, Vol. I, pp. 480-697. p. 183
- ⁷¹ This view was developed by Fustel de Coulanges in his *La cité antique*. p. 184
- ⁷² This note has been taken from a supplement found in Plekhanov's archives. p. 186
- ⁷³ This sort of diagnosis was characteristic of the bogus physician Sganarelle in Molière's comedies *Le Médecin malgré lui* and *Le Médecin volant*. p. 190
- ⁷⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 159. p. 194
- ⁷⁵ *Oblomov*—title character in I. A. Goncharov's novel. The name of Oblomov has come to stand for inertness, stagnation and passivity. p. 199
- ⁷⁶ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 200
- ⁷⁷ Plekhanov is quoting from an unsigned article "Zemlya i volya" (Land and Freedom) published in the journal *Zemlya i volya*, No. 1, October 25, 1878. p. 201
- ⁷⁸ The *Manchester School*—a trend in English political economy of mid-nineteenth century. Adherents of this school (Free Traders) expressed the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie and advocated free trade and non-interference by the state in economic life. p. 201
- ⁷⁹ The author of *Notes on Mill* was N. G. Chernyshevsky. p. 201
- ⁸⁰ The reference is to Ryleyev's poem *The Citizen*. p. 203
- ⁸¹ *Ivan Yermolayevich*—a character in a series of stories by G. I. Uspensky, *The Peasant and His Labour*. p. 203
- ⁸² *Quietism*—a religious-ethic doctrine that preaches mystically contemplative attitude towards life, passivity and complete submission to the "divine will". p. 204

- ⁸³ "Svistok" (Whistle), the satirical section in the journal *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) (1836-66), in which Dobrolyubov played the principal part. The barren optimism of the liberals and their ineptitude towards active struggle were vehemently ridiculed in its pages. p. 209
- ⁸⁴ The reference is to B. B. Glinsky's article "Youth and Its Leaders" published in No. 12 of *Istorichesky Vestnik* (Historical Herald) for 1895. p. 209
- ⁸⁵ The reference is to the participants in the Russian revolutionary movement in the sixties of the nineteenth century led by N. G. Chernyshevsky. p. 209

SOME REMARKS ON HISTORY

G. V. Plekhanov's "Some Remarks on History", a review of the book by P. Lacombe *The Sociological Foundations of History*, was first published in the newspaper *Samarsky Vestnik* (The Samara Herald), No. 8, January 11, and No. 10, January 14, 1897 under the pen-name of P. Bocharov, and was subsequently reprinted as a supplement to the fourth edition of Plekhanov's book, *The Development of the Monist View of History*, in 1906.

- ⁸⁶ Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism, maintained that social life is based on mental development, which goes through three phases: the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. Comte considered the positive phase genuinely scientific. This phase, which found its consummation in Comte's system, coincided with the domination of bourgeois relations. p. 212
- ⁸⁷ In Russian Plekhanov used the word *arshin*—old Russian measure equal to 71,12 cm. p. 215
- ⁸⁸ Trying to prove practical feasibility of their utopian socialist plans, Owen and his followers tried several times to organise, in the USA and some other countries, commune-colonies (Owen's New Harmony, etc.) p. 215
- ⁸⁹ On October 14, 1806 Napoleon's armies routed the Prussian troops at Jena and took Berlin a few days later. p. 219
- ⁹⁰ The author of *A System of Acquired Rights* was Ferdinand Lassalle, founder and leader of the General Association of German Workers. p. 220

ON THE MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

This article provides an analysis of the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Labriola's *Essays on the Materialist Understanding of History* which appeared in Rome in 1895-97. Plekhanov's article was published in the journal *Russkoye Slovo* (Russian Word), No. 12, 1897, and signed N. Kamensky.

- ⁹¹ *Subjectivists*—adherents of the subjective method in sociology, who denied the objective nature of the laws of social development and reduced history to the activities of individual heroes, "outstanding personalities". In the second half of the nineteenth century the subjective method in sociology was represented in Russia by the liberal Narodniks, N. K. Mikhailovsky among them. p. 222
- ⁹² *Teacher, Russian disciples*—designation of Marx and his followers in Russia used in the Russian legal press in view of the censorship. p. 223

- ⁹⁵ Marx and Engels's book *The Holy Family or the Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Co* was published in Frankfort on the Main in 1845.
Marx's book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, whose preface set forth the gist of historical materialism, appeared in Berlin in 1859. p. 224
- ⁹⁶ The expression "economic string" was used by N. K. Mikhailovsky in his review "Literature and Life" in the journal *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth), No. 1, 1894. p. 226
- ⁹⁶ *Teleology*—an idealist doctrine on expediency in Nature. p. 228
- ⁹⁶ The reference is to Paul Lafargue, whose pamphlet *Marx's Economic Materialism* popularised Marx's ideas. p. 229
- ⁹⁷ Plekhanov is contrasting the defeat of Italy in the aggressive Italo-Abyssinian War of 1895-96 to the Roman victory at Carthage, one of the richest trade centres in Northern Africa, during the Punic Wars of the 3rd-2nd cent. B.C. p. 236
- ⁹⁸ The author of the *Essays on the Gogol Period in Russian Literature* was N. G. Chernyshevsky. p. 236
- ⁹⁹ The reference is to Karl Marx. p. 238
- ¹⁰⁰ Constant religious wars between Catholics and Huguenots raged in France in the sixteenth century. p. 248
- ¹⁰¹ Plekhanov's expression "subjective old gentlemen" refers to the principal representative of the subjective method in sociology—N. K. Mikhailovsky—and his followers. p. 249
- ¹⁰² From N. V. Gogol's comedy *The Inspector-General*. p. 249
- ¹⁰³ Plekhanov is enumerating statements by N. K. Mikhailovsky which he has drastically criticised in his book *The Development of the Monist View of History* (see present edition, Vol. I). p. 249
- ¹⁰⁴ The reference is to Nikolai—on (Danielson) who was reputed a Marxist among the Narodniks. In his book, *Essays on Our Post-Reform Social Economy*, published in 1893, Nikolai—on called to direct, immediately and by-passing capitalism, "all efforts to unite agriculture and the processing industry in the hands of producers ... on the basis of the establishment of large-scale social production founded on the peasant commune." This book, the Narodniks believed, was to have put the Russian Marxists to shame for their alleged distortion of Marxism. p. 250

[ON THE "ECONOMIC FACTOR"]

This article is a reply to N. K. Mikhailovsky's review "On New Words and *Novoye Slovo*" published in the October issue of the journal *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth) for 1897. In its turn, the latter review was written in reply to Plekhanov's (Kamensky's) article "On the Materialist Understanding of History" which appeared in the September issue of the journal *Novoye Slovo* (New Word) (1897) (see this volume, pp. 222-50).

The article was prepared for the same *Novoye Slovo*, but in December 1897 the journal was banned by the censor.

In 1899 Plekhanov tried unsuccessfully to get it published in the journal *Nachalo* (The Beginning).

The article was written late in 1897 and early in 1898; it had no title.

- ¹⁰⁵ *Novoye Slovo* (New Word)—a monthly scientific, literary and political journal published in St. Petersburg from 1894 to 1897. It featured articles by revolutionary Marxists, including Lenin and Plekhanov. It was banned by the tsarist government.
- Russkoye Bogatstvo* (Russian Wealth)—a monthly journal published in St. Petersburg from 1876 to 1918. From early 1890s it became the mouthpiece of the liberal Narodniks under N. K. Mikhailovsky, which launched a campaign against the Russian Social-Democrats.
- Russkaya Mysl* (Russian Thought)—a monthly journal of a liberal Narodnik trend, published in Moscow from 1880 to 1918. During the polemic between the Marxists and Narodniks in the 1890s the editors, while retaining the Narodist stand, sometimes published articles by Marxists. p. 251
- ¹⁰⁶ This expression is taken from the title of D. I. Pisarev's article "A Stroll in the Gardens of Russian Letters". Pisarev was a Russian revolutionary democrat and literary critic. p. 252
- ¹⁰⁷ This refers to the book by Bloss *Die deutsche Revolution von 1848 bis 1849* (German Revolution from 1848 to 1849). p. 253
- ¹⁰⁸ A gap in the manuscript. One page is missing. p. 254
- ¹⁰⁹ See this volume, pp. 231-32 p. 256
- ¹¹⁰ *Bobchinsky* and *Dobchinsky*—characters in Gogol's comedy *The Inspector-General*. p. 257
- ¹¹¹ The term "subjective youths" was used by Mikhailovsky in answer to the epithet "subjective old gentlemen" which Plekhanov applied to Mikhailovsky and his adherents. p. 258
- ¹¹² Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. The quotation is given according to the first edition of Plekhanov's book *The Development of the Monist View of History*. p. 258
- ¹¹³ Marx's followers. p. 261
- ¹¹⁴ See this volume, pp. 228-29 p. 261
- ¹¹⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 131. p. 263
- ¹¹⁶ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 15 p. 263
- ¹¹⁷ The journal was published in Paris between 1825 and 1826. p. 264
- ¹¹⁸ In his review of Plekhanov's book, *The Development of the Monist View of History*, N. K. Mikhailovsky wrote: "...Of course, well-meaning people ought to 'promote the development of self-awareness' in people in general, and in 'proizvoditeli' in particular. Only this word 'proizvoditeli' is no good, it smacks of the stable. We are used to the word 'people' in such cases, meaning the working masses." p. 264
- ¹¹⁹ Gretchen's words from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 269
- ¹²⁰ A quotation from N. A. Nekrasov's poem "In the Village". p. 270
- ¹²¹ Victor Hugo's poem "Aujourd'hui" from the collection *Les contemplations*, Vol. 2. p. 271
- ¹²² The reference is to M. I. Tugan-Baranovsky's book, *Industrial Crises in Modern England, Their Origin and Influence on the Life of the People*, which was published in 1894. At the time Tugan-Baranovsky was a "legal Marxist" and used Marxist terminology in his works. p. 277

- ¹²³ "Literary acrobats"—Mikhailovsky's expression, used by Plekhanov against the former in his book *The Development of the Monist View of History*. p. 277
- ¹²⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Moscow, 1974, Vol. I, p. 29. p. 281
- ¹²⁵ Skalozub—a character in Griboyedov's *Wit Works Woe*. p. 282
- ¹²⁶ Here the manuscript breaks off. p. 282

ON THE QUESTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S ROLE IN HISTORY

The article was published in the journal *Nauchnoye Obozreniye* (Science Review), Nos. 3 and 4 for 1898.

- ¹²⁷ The reference is to N. K. Mikhailovsky, who responded to the publication of Kahlitz's article in his "Literary Notes for 1878". p. 283
- ¹²⁸ See Note 68. p. 284
- ¹²⁹ See Note 91. p. 289
- ¹³⁰ Plekhanov is referring to I. S. Turgenev's story "Hamlet of Shchigrov Uyezd". p. 289
- ¹³¹ *Akakii Akakievich*—a character in Gogol's story "A Greatcoat". p. 293
- ¹³² France was defeated in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. p. 295
- ¹³³ *Le Globe*—a magazine founded in Paris in 1824. It ceased publication in 1832. p. 299
- ¹³⁴ *The War of the Austrian Succession* (1740-48) was waged by Austria, supported by Britain, Holland and Russia, against Prussia, Spain, France and some German and Italian states. After the death of Emperor Karl VI, Austria's opponents claimed part of her territories. The war led to Austria losing most of industrial Silesia, which was annexed by Prussia, and several territories in Italy. p. 300
- ¹³⁵ According to the terms of the Peace Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), France had to cede all the territories annexed by her in the Netherlands. p. 300
- ¹³⁶ *The Seven Years War* (1756-63) was fought between two groups of states: one including Prussia, Britain and Portugal, and the other, France, Austria, Russia, Saxony and Sweden. The main causes of the war were Austria's attempts to regain Silesia which she had lost in the War of the Austrian Succession, as well as Anglo-French rivalry over colonies in Canada and India. The war gave Britain Canada and India. p. 300
- ¹³⁷ The accession of Peter III of Russia, who revered Frederick II and refused to continue the war against Prussia, facilitated Prussia's retainment of Silesia. p. 301
- ¹³⁸ King Louis XVI was guillotined on January 21, 1793. p. 307
- ¹³⁹ *Girondists*—a party of the big bourgeoisie at the time of the French Revolution. p. 307
- ¹⁴⁰ *The Thermidor reaction*—the period of political and social reaction following the counter-revolutionary coup in France on July 27, 1794 (9 Thermidor), which put an end to the Jacobin dictatorship, its leader Robespierre being executed.
- Thermidor, Floréal, Messidor, Brumaire, etc.—names of months in the Republican calendar introduced by the Convention in the autumn of 1793. p. 307

- ¹⁴¹ *The Battle of Arcole*, fought between French and Austrian armies, took place on November 15-17, 1796. p. 307
- ¹⁴² *The 18th Brumaire* (November 9) 1799—the day of the coup d'état carried out by Napoleon Bonaparte; the Directory was replaced by the Consulate, and subsequently led to the establishment of the Empire. p. 307
- ¹⁴³ *The Directory*—the government established in France after the coup of 9 Thermidor (July 27). It lasted from October 1795 till November 1799. p. 307

ON THE ALLEGED CRISIS IN MARXISM

This publication is a summary of Plekhanov's lecture directed against "critics" of Marx, particularly Eduard Bernstein and Conrad Schmidt. Plekhanov delivered this lecture in Geneva and other towns of Switzerland and Italy late in the spring and early summer of 1898.

Subsequently the lecture provided the basis for several articles, among which were "Bernstein and Materialism" and "Conrad Schmidt Versus Karl Marx and Frederick Engels".

- ¹⁴⁴ *The Young*—a petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchical opposition in the German Social-Democratic Party which arose in 1890. The "young" denied any kind of participation in parliamentary activities and disguised their opportunistic essence with the "Left" pseudo-revolutionary phrases. The "young" were expelled from the Party in October 1891 at the Congress of Erfurt. p. 316
- ¹⁴⁵ Bernstein launched a campaign against revolutionary Marxism with his article "Problems of Socialism", which was published in the theoretical organ of the German Social-Democrats *Neue Zeit* for 1898. p. 316
- ¹⁴⁶ Conrad Schmidt's article "Kant, sein Leben und seine Lehre" (Kant, His Life and Teaching), a review of Kronenberg's book of the same title, was published in the third supplement to the newspaper *Vorwärts!*, the central organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, on October 17, 1897. p. 316
- ¹⁴⁷ The reference is to Eduard Bernstein's article "Das realistische und das ideologische Moment des Sozialismus" (Realistic and Ideological Moments of Socialism) published in *Neue Zeit*, No. 34, May 27, 1898. p. 317
- ¹⁴⁸ *L'Encyclopédie* was published in the second half of the eighteenth century (1751-80) by Diderot and d'Alembert, whose aim was a struggle against the "ancient régime" and clericalism, and the development of progressive science, philosophy and arts.
- The excerpt, which Plekhanov intended to cite from Diderot's *Spinosiste* (not Spinosisme) is evidently the one he cited in his article "Bernstein and Materialism" (see p. 335 of this volume). p. 320
- ¹⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 323
- ¹⁵⁰ *La Palisse Truth*—the truth which is evident by itself and does not need any proofs. p. 325

BERNSTEIN AND MATERIALISM

This was the first article published by Plekhanov against revisionism. Plekhanov realised the danger Bernsteinianism was bringing in its wake earlier than did the other theorists of the Second International, and he resolutely came out against it.

The article was published in the journal *Neue Zeit*, No. 44, July 30, 1898 and in Russian in the symposium *Critique of Our Critics* in 1906.

- ¹⁸¹ The reference is to Bernstein's article "Das realistische und das ideologische Moment des Sozialismus. Probleme des Sozialismus. 2. Serie II" (Realistic and Ideological Moments of Socialism. Problems of Socialism, 2, Series II) published in Nos. 34-35 of *Neue Zeit* for 1898. p. 326
- ¹⁸² Bernstein is citing from Strecker's book *Die Welt und Menschheit* (The World and Mankind). p. 326
- ¹⁸³ Plekhanov is mistaken in his reference; the quotation is on p. 91 of the French edition. p. 329
- ¹⁸⁴ Plekhanov is in error when he says that Engels agreed with the proposition that "we only believe in the atom". Engels, like Marx, held the stand of the materialist theory of reflection, and considered matter as knowable. By this formulation Plekhanov is making a concession to agnosticism that is linked with another mistake, his assertion that our notions are not the copies, reflections of objects but hieroglyphs, the signs of objects. p. 330
- ¹⁸⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 347. p. 330
- ¹⁸⁶ In 1881 Eduard Bernstein was editor of *Sozial-Demokrat*, organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, which was published in Zurich. In 1888 Bernstein moved to London where, under the influence of trade unionism and bourgeois economic literature, he went over to revisionism. p. 330
- ¹⁸⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 349. p. 336
- ¹⁸⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 344. p. 338
- ¹⁸⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 13. p. 338
- ¹⁹⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 346. p. 338
- ¹⁹¹ The reference is to Marx's doctoral thesis, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". p. 339
- ¹⁹² While stressing the unity of the basic principles of pre-Marxian and dialectical materialism (in dealing with the principal question of philosophy), Plekhanov does not show the essential difference between them. He is in error in placing on a par Spinoza's materialism and philosophical positions of Marx and Engels. In his article "On the Alleged Crisis in Marxism" Plekhanov says: "...Present-day materialism is a Spinozism that has become more or less aware of itself" (see this volume, p. 320) p. 339
- ¹⁹³ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 335. p. 339
- ¹⁹⁴ The supposed title of the following article is "Frederick Engels and Conrad Schmidt". p. 339

WHAT SHOULD WE THANK HIM FOR?

This article was written by Plekhanov as an open letter to Kautsky after the Stuttgart Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party, on October 3-8, 1898. Bernstein addressed the Congress with a statement in which he set forth his principal "critical" propositions directed against Marxism. This statement gave rise to a heated discussion on the question of revisionism. A resolution was finally passed condemning revisionism, but no organisational measures against Bernstein were taken.

It was the concluding sentence in Kautsky's speech to the Congress, in which he thanked Bernstein, that prompted Plekhanov's article. It was published in the newspaper *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*, Nos. 253-55, October 30, November 2 and 3, 1898.

¹⁶⁵ Plekhanov is referring to Bernstein's well-known proposition, "the movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing", developed by the latter in his article "Der Kampf der Sozial-Demokratie und die Revolution der Gesellschaft" (The Struggle of Social-Democracy and Revolution of Society). p. 344

¹⁶⁶ Plekhanov means his own article "Cant Against Kant". p. 348

CANT AGAINST KANT

"Cant Against Kant" was written by Plekhanov in reply to Bernstein's pamphlet *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozial-Demokratie* (The Prerequisites of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democracy) which appeared in 1901 in a second Russian edition under the title of "Historical Materialism" in the journal of the Russian Social-Democrats *Zarya* (The Dawn) No. 2-3, which was published abroad. The *Neue Zeit*, as well as the organ of the French Socialist Party *Mouvement Socialiste* refused to publish it.

In the epigraph to the last chapter of his book *Historical Materialism*, "Kant Against Cant" Bernstein explained the word Cant as follows: "Cant" is an English word which came into use in the sixteenth century to denote the dismal chanting common with the Puritans. In its more general meaning it denotes the way of expression either wrong, unthinking or deliberately used erroneously." The reference in Bernstein's epigraph is: the contraposition of Kantianism to allegedly dogmatic and hypocritical Marxism. Plekhanov has changed the word order in Bernstein's phrase to make the meaning: hypocrisy against Kant.

¹⁶⁷ From N. Nekrasov's poem "In the Village". p. 352

¹⁶⁸ From G. Bürger's poem "Lenore". p. 352

¹⁶⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 137. p. 353

¹⁷⁰ The reference is to Engels's statement against the "young" in the German Social-Democracy (see Note 144). p. 354

¹⁷¹ Mephistopheles's words from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 354

¹⁷² *Jourdain*—a character in Molière's comedy *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. p. 357

¹⁷³ Plekhanov is referring to Bernstein's article "Dialektik und Entwicklung" (Dialectics and Development) published in *Neue Zeit*, Nos. 37-38 for 1899, in reply to Kautsky's article "Bernstein und Dialektik" which appeared in No. 28 of the same journal. p. 359

- ¹⁷⁴ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 179 p. 360
- ¹⁷⁵ The reference is to Plekhanov's article "Bernstein and Materialism". p. 361
- ¹⁷⁶ The reference is to the article "Bernstein and Materialism" published in *Neue Zeit*, No. 44 for 1898; it was a reply to Bernstein's article "Das realistische und das ideologische Moment des Sozialismus" mentioned in the quotation. p. 362
- ¹⁷⁷ *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* was edited by Karl Marx and Arnold Ruge, and published in German in Paris. One issue was put out in February 1844. p. 366
- ¹⁷⁸ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, pp. 175-76. p. 366
- ¹⁷⁹ See Plekhanov's work, "The Initial Phases of the Theory of the Class Struggle" (pp. 427-73 of this volume). p. 368
- ¹⁸⁰ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 369
- ¹⁸¹ See Plekhanov's second article against Struve published in this volume where he argues against the vulgar evolutionist assertions of the latter about the blunting of contradictions between labour and capital in bourgeois society. p. 372
- ¹⁸² F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 323. p. 375
- ¹⁸³ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 579. p. 376
- ¹⁸⁴ See pp. 513-66 in this volume. p. 376
- ¹⁸⁵ Economic trend (economists)—an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement at the turn of the century; adherents of Bernsteinism. Economists limited the tasks of the working class to economic struggle for higher wages, better working conditions, etc., asserting that political struggle is the liberal bourgeoisie's affair. p. 378
- ¹⁸⁶ The reference is to the journal *Rabocheye Dyelo* (Workers' Cause), organ of the Russian economists which was published in Geneva from 1899 to 1902. p. 378

CONRAD SCHMIDT VERSUS KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

This and the following articles, written by Plekhanov against Conrad Schmidt, present, together with articles against Bernstein, his most brilliant expositions against revisionism of Marxism.

Already in February 1898, after Bernstein's revisionist articles in which he alluded to Conrad Schmidt as an authority in philosophy appeared in the press, Plekhanov decided to come out against Conrad Schmidt.

The article was written in French in the autumn of 1898 and published in *Neue Zeit* No. 5, October 29, 1898. Plekhanov's article was met with great satisfaction by all revolutionary Marxists. The article was published in Russian in 1906, in the collection of Plekhanov's works entitled *A Critique of Our Critics*.

- ¹⁸⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 347. p. 380
- ¹⁸⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 101. p. 380

- ¹⁸⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 13. p. 380
- ¹⁹⁰ *Goethes Werke*, Berlin, Ausgabe Gustave Hempel, II, S. 230. p. 383
- ¹⁹¹ *The Sage of Königsberg—Kant*. p. 388
- ¹⁹² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 335. p. 390
- ¹⁹³ K. Marx and F. Engels. *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 361. p. 391
- ¹⁹⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 346. p. 391
- ¹⁹⁵ Citation from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 397

MATERIALISM OR KANTIANISM

After the publication of Plekhanov's article "Conrad Schmidt Versus Karl Marx and Frederick Engels" Schmidt printed his "Some Remarks on the Last Article by Plekhanov in *Neue Zeit*", *Neue Zeit*, No. 11, 1898. Plekhanov was indignant at Schmidt's attacks against Marxism and materialism, which revealed such ignorance, and at his neo-Kantian reasoning, so he made a reply in his article "Materialism or Kantianism" which was published in *Neue Zeit* in February 1899. Plekhanov's correspondence with Karl Kautsky which is extant shows the latter's striving to tone down the sharpness of Plekhanov's arguments and his desire not to offend Conrad Schmidt, giving Plekhanov no more space in *Neue Zeit* than to Conrad Schmidt. The article appeared in Russian in 1906, in the collection of Plekhanov's works *A Critique of Our Critics*.

- ¹⁹⁶ See this volume, p. 381 p. 399
- ¹⁹⁷ In his striving to dissociate himself from the "vulgar philosophy of identity" of matter and thinking, Plekhanov is mistaken here, as in some other places, when he asserts that sensations are "quite unlike" the objects that cause them; this is a concession to agnosticism. As a result Plekhanov was uncritical of Herbert Spencer, stating that the latter had developed the theory of the French materialists, while in actual fact he was an agnostic and an adherent of religion. p. 412

MATERIALISM YET AGAIN

This article was Plekhanov's reply to Conrad Schmidt's "Was ist Materialismus?" (What Is Materialism?) which appeared in *Neue Zeit* in February 1899. The editorial board decided to finish the polemic with this article, offering Schmidt the final say. In this connection, Plekhanov asked Wilhelm Liebknecht to publish his reply to Schmidt in the newspaper *Vorwärts!* However, the *Vorwärts!* editorial board also thought it better to refrain from criticising Schmidt's "philosophical heresy", and forwarded the manuscript to the journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. In 1906 the article was published in Russian, in the collection of Plekhanov's works entitled *A Critique of Our Critics*.

- ¹⁹⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 417
- ¹⁹⁹ Plekhanov is obviously mistaken here in stating that sensations and representations do not resemble the things which have engendered them.

Sensations and representations are actually replicas, images of objects of the real world. p. 419

- ²⁰⁰ Plekhanov is making a concession to agnosticism in maintaining that subjectivity is the primary distinctive property of space and time. In fact space and time are objectively real forms of the existence of matter as reflected in human mind. p. 419

- ²⁰¹ In his exposition of the Marxist theory of reflection Plekhanov was in error when he spoke of the so-called "theory of hieroglyphs", which consists in the assertion that human sensations, representations and notions are not replicas of objects but merely signs, hieroglyphs. For criticism of this theory see V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Emprtio-criticism* (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 14, pp. 232-38). p. 419

REPLY TO AN INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE NEWSPAPER *LA PETITE RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE*

Plekhanov's reply to an international questionnaire of the newspaper *La petite République Socialiste* was published together with a number of answers by socialists from other countries in a fortnightly supplement to the newspaper on September 22, 1899.

- ²⁰² The *Dreyfus Case*—a provocative trial of Dreyfus, a French General Staff officer of Jewish nationality, who was falsely charged with espionage and high treason. It was staged in 1894 by reactionary monarchists in the French army. Dreyfus was sentenced to life imprisonment by a court martial. The Dreyfus case was used by the French reactionary circles to foment anti-Semitism and attack the republican regime and democratic liberties. When in 1898 socialists and progressive bourgeois democrats (such as Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès and Anatole France) started a campaign for re-examination of the Dreyfus case, the latter assumed a markedly political character. The country was split into two camps, with the republicans and democrats on one side, and the bloc of monarchists, clericals, anti-Semites and nationalists on the other. Under pressure of public opinion, Dreyfus was pardoned and released in 1899, but it was only in 1906 that he was acquitted by the Court of Cassation and reinstated in the army. p. 421

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL VIEWS OF KARL MARX

Plekhanov delivered this speech at a meeting in Switzerland in the late 1890s (most likely in 1897 or early in 1898).

- ²⁰³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 426

THE INITIAL PHASES OF THE THEORY OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

In 1898 Plekhanov decided to write an introduction to a new Russian edition of Marx and Engels's *Manifesto of the Communist Party* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its first publication. This proved a lengthy undertaking, which ultimately produced an independent article written with due regard for all instances of "criticism" of Marxism at the end of the nineteenth century. The second Russian edition of the *Manifesto* with Plekhanov's introduction appeared in Geneva in 1900.

- ²⁰⁴ Marx/ Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 1, S. 343-46. p. 427

- ²⁰⁵ Engels's work is an analysis of Carlyle's *Past and Present* (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, pp. 444-68). p. 427
- ²⁰⁶ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 457. p. 428
- ²⁰⁷ The reference is to a book by a German neo-Kantian philosopher Friedrich Albert Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*. p. 429
- ²⁰⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 101. p. 429
- ²⁰⁹ The storming of the Bastille (*July 14, 1789*) marked the beginning of the French Revolution.
August 10, 1792—the day of the popular insurrection in Paris which resulted in the abolition of monarchy. p. 436
- ²¹⁰ The reference is to the Paris Commune of 1871—the first dictatorship of the proletariat in history; it lasted 72 days, from March 18 to May 28, 1871. p. 436
- ²¹¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 703. p. 436
- ²¹² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 110-11. p. 440
- ²¹³ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 134. p. 446
- ²¹⁴ *The Society of the Seasons* (Société des Saisons)—a secret socialist republican organisation, led by Blanqui and Barbès, which was active in Paris in 1837-39. p. 447
- ²¹⁵ In his estimation of the views of Guizot and his followers on the question of the class struggle Plekhanov is uncritical in bringing together their views and those of Marx and Engels. He does not show the qualitative distinctions between them or the new principles brought by Marxism into the theory of the class struggle. p. 449
- ²¹⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 117. p. 450
- ²¹⁷ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 450
- ²¹⁸ *Diacrit*—land-poor peasants of Northern and North East Attica; *Paralit*—maritime dwellers, traders, artisans, sailors; *Pediti*—dwellers of the plains, big landowners in Ancient Greece (6th cent. B. C.). p. 452
- ²¹⁹ *Little Russia*—the name of the Ukraine used in official documents in tsarist Russia. p. 452
- ²²⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Moscow, 1973, Vol. 1, p. 120. p. 453
- ²²¹ Another author, i.e., Beltov (Plekhanov's pseudonym), which was the subject of Kareyev's article. p. 454
- ²²² Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 455
- ²²³ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 456
- ²²⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 125. p. 457

- 225 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 113. p. 458
- 226 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 114. p. 458
- 227 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 488. p. 460
- 228 K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 441-42 (Engels to W. Borgius, January 25, 1894). p. 460
- 229 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 116. p. 460
- 230 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 125. p. 461
- 231 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 137. p. 461
- 232 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 184. p. 461
- 233 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 185. p. 462
- 234 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 463
- 235 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 464
- 236 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 199-200. p. 469
- 237 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 199. p. 469
- 238 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 196-99. p. 469
- 239 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 199. p. 470
- 240 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 201. p. 470
- 241 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 204. p. 471
- 242 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 137. p. 472
- 243 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 201. p. 472

A CRITIQUE OF OUR CRITICS

Mr. P. Struve in the Role of Critic of the Marxist Theory
of Social Development

These articles, "Mr. Struve in the Role of a Critic of the Marxist Theory of Social Development", were a reply to Struve's article "Marx's Theory of Social Development", which was published in 1899 in the journal *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik* (Archive of the Social Le-

gislation and Statistics). They appeared in *Zarya* (Dawn), the theoretical organ of the Russian Marxists, which was brought out in Stuttgart. Planned as the first part of the work, they contained, in particular, criticism of Struve's revision of Marxism in the sphere of political economy and sociology. The second part, which was never written, was intended to criticise Struve's philosophical views.

- ²⁴⁴ The correct date is August 27, 1890. Frederick Engels, Paul and Laura Lafargue, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1960, p. 386. p. 474
- ²⁴⁵ *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik* (Archive of the Social Legislation and Statistics)—a journal founded in 1888 by the German Social-Democrat G. Braun. p. 477
- ²⁴⁶ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 20-21. p. 481
- ²⁴⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 113. p. 482
- ²⁴⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 113-14. p. 483
- ²⁴⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 118-19. p. 483
- ²⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, pp. 248-50. p. 483
- ²⁵¹ The reference is to Stammler's book, *Wirtschaft und Recht nach der materialistischen Geschichts-Auffassung. Eine sozial-philosophische Untersuchung* (Economy and Law from the Point of View of the Materialist Understanding of History. Social-philosophical Research), Leipzig, 1896, in which the author criticised Marxism from the neo-Kantian stand. p. 484
- ²⁵² *Civil Code*—Code Civil—the French legal code—the Napoleonic Code—was promulgated in 1804. It established the abolition of feudal relations and legalised the rule of bourgeoisie. It was based on the principles of equality of all citizens before the law and the unrestricted domination of private ownership. p. 484
- ²⁵³ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 487
- ²⁵⁴ From Mikhail Lermontov's poem *Mtsyri*. p. 487
- ²⁵⁵ The permits system of establishing joint-stock companies provided for any new joint-stock company obtaining permission from the appropriate state bodies. This system hindered the establishment of joint-stock companies. In the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century, it was replaced by the so-called *fait-accompli* system: a newly-established company had only to apply to the appropriate ministry for registration. p. 489
- ²⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 490
- ²⁵⁷ From Ivan Krylov's fable *The Inquisitive One*. p. 492
- ²⁵⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 137. p. 493
- ²⁵⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 134. p. 494
- ²⁶⁰ In 1798 the British government, fearful of the revolutionary events in France, had the so-called Sedition Acts passed, according to which any

- attack against the government or laws, whether oral or in print, was severely punishable. The Acts were repealed in 1800. In 1799-1800 Parliament passed the Combination Acts which banned workers' unions. The growing working-class movement led to the repeal of these laws in 1824.
p. 497
- ²⁶¹ *Attentats*—politically motivated attempts on someone's life. p. 497
- ²⁶² The *Regency* (1811-20)—the period during which the Prince of Wales, the future George IV, was regent for George III, his father. p. 498
- ²⁶³ *The Holy Alliance*—a reactionary union of three emperors (Russia, Austria and Prussia) concluded in 1815 in Paris after Napoleon's defeat. Its aim was the mutual support of the European monarchs in preserving the European state borders established after the Napoleonic wars, and in countering the revolutionary movement. p. 498
- ²⁶⁴ *Anti-Socialist Law* was passed in 1878 in Germany to ban the social-democratic organisations in the country, the workers' press and the dissemination of socialist literature. The law was repealed in 1890 under the impact of the working-class movement. p. 498
- ²⁶⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6 Moscow, 1976, p. 183. p. 500
- ²⁶⁶ Serfdom in tsarist Russia was abolished only in 1861. p. 507
- ²⁶⁷ From Goethe's poem *Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas!* p. 511
- ²⁶⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, pp. 883-84. p. 512
- ²⁶⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 512
- ²⁷⁰ *The Fabian Society*—a reformist organisation founded in Britain in 1884, its mainly intellectualist membership including Sydney and Beatrice Webb. p. 520
- ²⁷¹ A modification of a quotation from Alexander Griboyedov's play *Wit Works Woe*. p. 540
- ²⁷² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, pp. 505-06. p. 541
- ²⁷³ *The iron laws of wages*—a dogma of the bourgeois political economy, thus designated by Lassalle. Basing themselves on the proposition that wages have "natural" limits in the growth of population, bourgeois economists maintained that it is Nature, not social conditions, that causes poverty and unemployment in the working classes. For criticism of this law see Marx's works *The Gotha Programme* and *Capital*. p. 544
- ²⁷⁴ The reference is to the speech by Decurtins, a representative of the Swiss Catholic Party, delivered by him at the 1897 Zurich International Congress on the regulation of the workers' question. Decurtins proposed that the congress should demand the banning of female labour at factories, the aim being the protection of the family. His proposal was rejected as reactionary. p. 545
- ²⁷⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 117. p. 548
- ²⁷⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 163. p. 549

- ²⁷⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 167. p. 550
- ²⁷⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 173. p. 550
- ²⁷⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 174. p. 550
- ²⁸⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, pp. 489-90. p. 550
- ²⁸¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 610. p. 551
- ²⁸² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 611. p. 551
- ²⁸³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 604. p. 552
- ²⁸⁴ Under the Poor Law passed in Britain in 1834, vagrants and street beggars were sent to workhouses, which were actually barracks and prisons for the poor. p. 553
- ²⁸⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 612. p. 555
- ²⁸⁶ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 495. p. 557
- ²⁸⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 604. p. 564
- ²⁸⁸ *The obscure philosopher of Ephesus*—Heraclitus of Ephesus, a major philosopher of antiquity and founder of dialectics, was called "obscure" because his statements were hard to understand. p. 573
- ²⁸⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 128-29. p. 574
- ²⁹⁰ *Justice*—weekly organ of the British Social-Democratic Federation, published from 1884 till 1925. p. 580
- ²⁹¹ From Nikolai Gogol's comedy *The Marriage*. p. 582
- ²⁹² *Credo*—the title of the manifesto which expounded the main propositions of Russian opportunism—Economism (see Note 185). p. 585
- ²⁹³ *Vademecum for the Editorial Board of "Rabocheye Dyelo"*—a collection of materials published by the Emancipation of Labour group with an introduction by G. Plekhanov (Geneva, 1900); it was directed against opportunism in the R.S.D.L.P. and especially against the Economists and their journal *Rabocheye Dyelo*. p. 586
- ²⁹⁴ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21. p. 586
- ²⁹⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 120. p. 588
- ²⁹⁶ A modification of a quotation from Ivan Krylov's fable "The Inquisitive One". p. 589
- ²⁹⁷ *Kozma Prutkov*—the satirical literary pseudonym used by a group of Russian poets in the sixties of the nineteenth century. p. 592
- ²⁹⁸ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 29. p. 594
- ²⁹⁹ *Sozial-Demokrat*—a literary and political collection published abroad in 1890-92 by the Emancipation of Labour group; it played an important part in disseminating Marxism in Russia. p. 594

THE MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

A series of lectures delivered by G. Plekhanov in Geneva to Swiss and Italian workers and some representatives of Geneva and Russian intellectuals on March 8, 15, 23 and 30, 1901. They were first published in the French journal *La nouvelle revue socialiste* in 1926.

- ³⁰⁰ The *Cimbri*—German tribes inhabiting the Jutland peninsula, who marched on Rome and were routed in 101 B.C. by the Roman Consul Caius Marius. p. 602
- ³⁰¹ Holbach was of German descent. p. 614
- ³⁰² Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20. p. 617
- ³⁰³ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 20-21. p. 618

ON A BOOK BY MASARYK

This article was published in the journal *Zarya* (The Dawn) in 1901. Tomas Masaryk, professor of philosophy in the University of Prague, was a founder and ideologist of the bourgeois-liberal Czech Popular (Realist) Party and President of the Czechoslovak Republic for several years.

In his "criticism" of Marxism, Masaryk contraposed to it bourgeois-nationalistic ideology, and preached a brand of "religious democratism" akin to "ethic socialism".

- ³⁰⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, pp. 128-29. p. 630
- ³⁰⁵ *Cain* and *Manfred*—title characters in Byron's dramas. *Rolla*—title character in Musset's poem. *Ivan*—one of the characters in Dostoyevsky's *The Karamazov Brothers*. p. 635
- ³⁰⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 186-204. p. 635
- ³⁰⁷ Plekhanov is citing the title of the well-known pamphlet by L. Tikhomirov, "Why I Have Ceased to Be a Revolutionary". p. 635
- ³⁰⁸ These are two F. Engels's letters to Lafargue dated March 6, 1894 and April 3, 1895. (See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 447 and 461). p. 636
- ³⁰⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 361. p. 637

THIS THUNDER IS NOT FROM A STORM CLOUD

This article, directed against the Georgian anarchist V. N. Cherkezov (V. Marveli), appeared in the weekly Georgian newspaper *Kvali*, Nos. 26-28 for 1901 and was signed with the pen-name of Idem.

Kvali, organ of the Mesame-Dasi, liberal-nationalist organisation, was published from 1893 till 1904 in Tiflis (Tbilisi).

- ³¹⁰ The Letter "A" stands for V. N. Cherkezov, who published, in the European anarchist press, a series of articles directed against Marxism. The Letter "B" stands for the Georgian newspaper *Iveria*, organ of Pirveli-Dasi, which expressed the interests of the national liberation movement of the Georgian intelligentsia. Marveli's article "A Voyage to

Belgium", which is denoted by Plekhanov by the letter *U*, was published in the newspaper *Iveria*. p. 640

- ³¹¹ *The Brandenburg Gate* in Berlin was built in 1789-93. In this context it is used as a symbol of the triumphant monarchy. p. 641
- ³¹² The reference is to the following passage from Belinsky's letter to Botkin dated March 1, 1841: "Thank you so much, Yegor Fyodorovich, I bow to your philosophical cap; but with all reverence due to your philosophical philistinism I have the honour of informing you that had I managed to mount the highest rung of the ladder of development, even then I would have asked you to report to me on all victims of the condition of life and history, all victims of chance, superstition, the Inquisition, Philip II and so on; otherwise I jump from the upper rung head first." Belinsky nicknamed Hegel Yegor Fyodorovich. p. 641
- ³¹³ The philosophical-literary circle was headed by Stankevich in the thirties of the last century. The circle's members were opposed to the serfowning system in Russia and took an interest in German classical philosophy. p. 642
- ³¹⁴ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 192. p. 648
- ³¹⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 173. p. 649
- ³¹⁶ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 29. p. 653
- ³¹⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 129. p. 653
- ³¹⁸ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 7. p. 656

ON CROCE'S BOOK

In 1901 Croce, the Italian philosopher and publicist, who at the beginning of his career considered himself a Marxist, published a collection of his revisionist articles which had appeared in various Italian and French journals in 1895-99.

Plekhanov's review of these articles was published in *Zarya* (The Dawn), No. 4, August 1902.

The title of Croce's book in the sub-title of Plekhanov's review is inaccurate. Croce's book was published in a Russian translation under the title *Historical Materialism and Marxist Economy. Critical Essays*.

- ³¹⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, pp. 232-40. p. 660
- ³²⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, p. 236. p. 660
- ³²¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, p. 236. p. 660
- ³²² M. Tugan-Baranovsky's article "The Principal Mistake of Marx's Abstract Theory of Capitalism" was published in the May issue of the journal *Nauchnoye Obozreniye* (Science Review) for 1899. The author maintained that there was a contradiction between Volumes I and III of Marx's *Capital*, and denied the existence of the law of value under capitalism. p. 661
- ³²³ *Nauchnoye Obozreniye* (Science Review), which was put out in St. Petersburg from 1894 to 1903, carried articles by scholars and publicists of various schools and trends. It also published articles by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

N. Karelin—Zasulich's article "Reader's Remarks on Tugan-Baranovsky and Struve's 'Elimination' of Marx's Theory of Profit" appeared under this pen-name in *Nauchnoye Obozreniye* in November 1900. p. 661

- ³²⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1974, pp. 128-29. p. 665
- ³²⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1974, pp. 139-50. p. 665
- ³²⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1974, p. 397. p. 666
- ³²⁷ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 243. p. 666
- ³²⁸ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1975, p. 244. p. 666
- ³²⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 196 and 197. p. 668
- ³³⁰ See pp. 283-15 in this volume. p. 669
- ³³¹ Plekhanov's article "On the Materialist Understanding of Nature" (see pp. 222-50) in this volume) was published under the pen-name of N. Kamensky in the journal *Novoye Slovo* (New Word), No. 12, 1897. p. 670

KARL MARX

This article was published in *Iskra*, No. 35, March 1, 1903.

Iskra (The Spark)—the first all-Russia illegal Marxist newspaper was founded by Lenin in 1900 and played a decisive role in the organisation of a working-class Marxist revolutionary party of Russia. The newspaper was published abroad and illegally shipped to Russia. Members of its editorial board were V. I. Lenin, G. V. Plekhanov, L. Martov, V. I. Zasulich and A. N. Potresov.

- ³³² *The International Working Men's Association*—the First International—the first international mass organisation of the proletariat, was founded by Karl Marx in 1864. The First International conducted vast work in blending socialism with the working-class movement. p. 672
- ³³³ From Heine's poem *Deutschland. Ein Winter Märchen*. p. 673
- ³³⁴ *Socialist-Revolutionaries* (S.R.s)—a party of the Russian petty bourgeoisie established late in 1901 and early in 1902. The Socialist-Revolutionaries demanded the liquidation of land ownership and proposed the slogan of "equalitarian land tenure". They resorted to individual terror in their struggle against the autocracy. Their views, Narodist in character, were alien to Marxism. p. 674
- ³³⁵ *The Emancipation of Labour group*—the first Russian Marxist group, founded by Plekhanov in 1883 in Switzerland, carried on important work in disseminating Marxism in Russia. It translated into Russian, published abroad and distributed in Russia works by Marx and Engels, its own publications also popularising Marxism. p. 674
- ³³⁶ The reference is to F. Engels's letter to Vera Zasulich dated April 23, 1885. p. 674
- ³³⁷ The reference is to the Rostov-on-Don strike of 1902, in which about 30 thousand workers took part. p. 674
- ³³⁸ *Osvobozhdeniye* (Liberation)—a fortnightly journal published abroad in 1902-05 and edited by P. Struve, the organ of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie which propounded the views of moderate monarchical liberals. p. 676

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Hettner, Hermann (1821-1882)—German bourgeois historian of literature.—44, 85, 134

Heyden, Jan van der (1637-1712)—Dutch painter.—310

Heywood, Thomas (1574-1644)—English playwright, contemporary of Shakespeare.—310

Hildebrandt, Bruno (1812-1878)—German vulgar economist, representative of so-called historical school of political economy.—677

Hippocrates (c. 460-377 B.C.)—Greek physician called father of medicine.—149

Hirsch, Paul (1868-1938)—German Social-Democrat.—562

Hobbema Meindert (1638-1709)—Dutch landscape painter.—310

Hobbes, Thomas (1588-1679)—English philosopher, representative of mechanistic materialism.—45, 70, 416, 419

Hobson, John Atkinson (1858-1940)—British bourgeois economist, representative of bourgeois reformism and pacifism.—554

Hoche, Lazare (1768-1797)—general of French Revolution.—309

Hoernes, Maurice (1852-1917)—Austrian archaeologist and historian of primitive culture.—677

Holbach, Paul Henri (1723-1789)—French materialist philosopher, ideologist of French revolutionary bourgeoisie.—31-45, 47-48, 50-51, 53-71, 82-85, 89, 97, 104-106, 109, 117, 119, 127-28, 148, 177-78, 180, 318, 329, 334-35, 336, 408

Homer—epic poet of ancient Greece regarded by the Greeks as author of *Illiad* and *Odyssey*.—158

Hortensius Quintus, Horatius (114-50 B.C.)—celebrated Roman orator, principal rival of Cicero.—602

Howell, George (1833-1910)—British trade-unionist, member of General Council of First International, subsequently renegade.—497

Hubert-Valleroux, Paul (b. 1844)—French jurist.—564

Hume, David (1711-1776)—Scottish philosopher, subjective idealist, agnostic.—107, 111, 135, 330, 638

Huxley, Thomas Henry (1825-1895)—English biologist, Darwinist.—96, 135, 319, 396, 638

I

Ibsen, Henrik (1828-1906)—Norwegian dramatist.—544

Ihering, Rudolph von (1818-1892)—German bourgeois jurist.—496

Isayev, Andrei Alexeyevich (1851-1924)—Russian bourgeois economist and statistician.—522

J

Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich (1743-1819)—German idealist philosopher and metaphysician, came out against rationalism, and in defence of religious faith and sensational intuition, which he considered as true ways of cognition.—40, 381, 400-402, 406, 412

Jaurès, Jean (1859-1914)—prominent figure in international socialist movement, leader of Right wing of French socialist party, historian; came out against war and militarism.—170-71, 466, 468

Joly, Henri (1839-1925)—French philosopher and psychologist.—297, 555, 559

Jonson, Ben (1573-1637)—English poet and dramatist, contemporary of Shakespeare.—310

Joubert, Barthélemy (1769-1799)—French general.—307, 309

Jourdan, Jean Baptiste (1762-1833)—marshal of France, fought in French revolutionary wars at the end of eighteenth century.—309

Julian "the Apostate" (c. 331-363)—Roman emperor (361-363).—

Junot, Andache (1771-1813)—French general, fought in Napoleonic wars.—309

K

Kablits (Yusov), Iosif Ivanovich (1848-1893)—Russian writer, one of the extreme Right-wing representatives of Liberal Narodniks.—283, 314

Kamensky (pseudonym of G. V. Plekhanov).—260, 262

Kampfmeier, Paul (b. 1865)—German reformist and revisionist.—565

Kant, Immanuel (1724-1804)—idealist philosopher, founder of classical German philosophy.—41, 133, 279-80, 317, 320-21, 326, 330, 331, 337, 352, 362, 365, 367, 368-69, 379-89, 396-97, 399-407, 409-14, 418, 425, 465, 567, 570-73

Karelin—see *Zasulich V. I.*

Kareyev, Nikolai Ivanovich (1850-1931)—Russian liberal historian.—222, 229, 252-56, 270, 293, 294, 367-68, 447, 454, 639, 669

Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938)—leader of German Social-Democracy and of Second International; initially Marxist, later ideologist of Centrism; opportunist.—151, 254, 368, 374, 472, 477, 544-45, 565, 661

Kautz, Julius (1829-1909)—Hungarian economist.—316

Khomyakov, Alezei Stepanovich (1804-1860)—Russian public figure and writer; Slavophile.—490

Kirkup, Thomas (1844-1912)—English economist and sociologist, "critic" of Marx.—442, 564

Kistiyakovsky, Alexander Fyodorovich (1833-1885)—well-known Russian professor of law.—567

Kléber, Jean Baptiste (1753-1800)—French general, fought in revolutionary wars.—309

Kluge Hermann (1832-1914)—German literary critic, author of numerous text-books on history of German literature.—159

Kozma Prutkov—literary pseudonym used in second half of nineteenth century by poets A. K. Tolstoy and Zhemchuznikov brothers.—592

Korkunov, Nikolai Mikhailovich (1853-1904)—Russian bourgeois jurist.—244

Kavalevsky, Maxim Mazimovich (1851-1916)—Russian scientist, jurist, historian, sociologist and politician with liberal bourgeois leanings.—245-46, 507-508

Krivenko, Sergei Nikolayevich (1847-1906)—publicist, representative of liberal Narodniks. In his work played down class antagonisms, rejected capitalist road of Russia's development.—229, 256

Krylov, Ivan Andreyevich (1769-1844)—Russian fabulist.—492

Kudrin—see *Rusanov N. S.*

Kugelmann, Ludwig (1830-1902)—Hanover physician, took part in 1848 Revolution, member of First International, corresponded with Marx.—667

Kulemann, Wilhelm (1851-1926)—author of book *Die Gewerkschafts Bewegung* (Trade Union Movement).—498, 579

L

Labriola, Antonio (1843-1904)—Italian Marxist philosopher, came out against bourgeois critics of Marxism and revisionists.—222-24, 227-40, 244, 245-47, 249-250, 256, 261-62, 430, 669

La Chaussée, Pierre Claude Nivelle de (1692-1754)—French dramatist.—627

- Lacombe, Paul Joseph* (1834-1919)—French bourgeois historian.—211-13, 214-16, 218-21
- Lafargue, Paul* (1842-1911)—one of founders of French Socialist Party, disciple and comrade-in-arms of Marx, theorist and talented propagandist of Marxism.—171, 474, 636
- Laharpe Jean François de* (1739-1803)—French dramatist and critic, theorist of French classicism; Voltairianist in his youth, turned reactionary after the Revolution.—77-78, 90-91, 93
- Lamarck, Jean Baptiste* (1744-1829)—prominent French naturalist, evolutionist, forerunner of Darwin.—154
- Lameth, Alexandre de* (1760-1829)—member of the Constituent Assembly during French Revolution.—435
- La Mettrie, Julien Offroy de* (1709-1751)—French materialist philosopher and atheist.—40, 44, 77, 79, 248, 318-20, 330, 332-34, 335-36, 361-63, 382, 415-16, 637, 638
- Lampe, Friedrich*—Kant's servant.—42, 78
- Lamprecht, Karl* (1856-1915)—German liberal historian.—294
- Lange, Friedrich Albert* (1828-1875)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—32, 40-41, 64, 79-80, 82, 85, 94, 133-34, 353, 354, 361, 365, 408, 415-16, 420, 650
- Lannes, Jean duc de Montebello* (1769-1809)—marshal of France under Napoleon.—309
- Lanson, Gustave* (1857-1934)—French bourgeois historian of literature.—284
- Laplace, Pierre Simon* (1749-1827)—prominent French astronomer, mathematician and physicist.—55, 425
- Lassalle, Ferdinand* (1825-1864)—German petty-bourgeois socialist, publicist. Founder of German General Workers' Union (1863) in which he pursued opportunist line.—295, 260, 544
- Lasswitz, Kurt* (1848-1910)—German man of letters and philosopher, neo-Kantian.—383-86
- Laudon, Gideon Ernst* (1716-1790)—Austrian fieldmarshal, fought in Seven Years War.—301
- Lavallée, Theophile-Sebastien* (1804-1866)—French historian.—677
- Lefebvre, Pierre François Joseph* (1755-1820)—marshal of France, fought in all Napoleonic wars.—309
- Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm* (1646-1716)—prominent German mathematician and idealist philosopher.—92, 286, 361, 572
- Leroy-Beaulieu, Pierre Paul* (1843-1916)—French bourgeois economist.—343, 559, 561
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim* (1729-1781)—German writer, critic and philosopher, prominent Enlightenment.—40, 237, 345
- Lessner, Friedrich* (1825-1910)—German worker, tailor by trade, member of Communist League, took part in 1848 Revolution, member of General Council of First International, stood close to Marx.—673
- Letourneau, Charles Jean-Marie* (1831-1902)—French anthropologist.—184, 197, 621
- Levasseur, Pierre Emile* (1828-1911)—French bourgeois economist and historian.—542, 547, 554, 555
- Levasseur, René* (1747-1834)—took part in French Revolution, Jacobin.—373
- Lewis, George Henry* (1817-1878)—British positivist philosopher, physiologist and author.—249, 278
- Liebknecht, Wilhelm* (1826-1900)—one of founders and leaders of

- German Social-Democratic Party.—346, 351
- Lignac, Joseph-Adrien le Large de* (1710-1762)—French Cartesian philosopher, opposed Locke and French materialists.—47
- Lillo, George* (1693-1739)—English dramatist.—627
- Linnaeus, (Carl von Linné)* (1707-1778)—famous Swedish naturalist.—263, 652-54
- Liscow, Cristian Ludwig* (1701-1760)—German satirical writer.—257
- Liszt, Franz von* (1851-1919)—German criminologist.—561, 562, 563
- Locke, John* (1632-1704)—English materialist philosopher.—31, 39, 47, 55, 73, 110-11, 416, 606-07, 657
- Lombroso, Cesare* (1835-1909)—Italian psychiatrist and criminologist, founder of reactionary anthropological trend in bourgeois criminal law.—563
- Lopattn, Herman Alexandrovich* (1845-1918)—Russian revolutionary, socialist, disciple of N. G. Chernyshevsky, translator (together with Danielson) of Volume I of Marx's *Capital*.—673
- Loria, Achille* (1857-1943)—Italian bourgeois sociologist and economist, representative of vulgar political economy, falsifier of Marxism.—222
- Lotze, Rudolf Hermann* (1817-1881)—German idealist philosopher and eclectic.—420
- Louis Bonaparte*—See Napoleon III
- Louis-Philippe* (1773-1850)—King of the French, ascended throne after 1830 revolution; was dethroned by 1848 Revolution.—137, 155, 201, 268, 308
- Louis IX (Saint Louis)* (1215-1270)—King of France (1226-1270).—435
- Louis XI* (1423-1483)—King of France (1461-1483).—430
- Louis XII* (1462-1515)—King of France (1498-1515).—289
- Louis XIV* (1638-1715)—King of France (1643-1715).—324, 431, 506, 507
- Louis XV* (1710-1774)—King of France (1715-1774).—219, 300, 302-304, 310
- Louis XVI* (1754-1792)—King of France (1774-1792), guillotined by order of Convention.—63, 273, 310, 506
- Lucretia* (Vic. B.C.)—Roman Matron, who according to a story stabbed herself after being ravished by king's son.—92
- Lucretius, Carus Titus* (99-55 B.C.)—Roman poet, materialist philosopher, author of *De Rerum Natura*.—89, 365
- Lübke, Wilhelm* (1826-1893)—German historian of art.—235
- Luther, Martin* (1483-1546)—German leader of Protestant Reformation.—285
- Lycurgus*—semi-legendary legislator of Sparta.—85, 99, 297
- Lyell, Sir Charles* (1797-1875)—British geologist, founder of evolutionary geology.—425
- Lysandre* (Vc. B.C.)—general of Sparta.—297

M

- Mably, Gabriel Bonnot, de* (1709-1785)—French utopian communist.—58, 190, 240, 297
- Macdonald, Alexandre* (1765-1840)—marshal of France, fought in Napoleonic wars.—307, 309
- Macrosty, Henry William* (b. 1865)—British economist.—531
- Mohammed*—according to legend founder of Islam.—219, 284-85, 289

- Maine, Sir Henry James Sumner* (1822-1888)—English jurist, legal historian, expert on ancient law and primitive society.—158
- Malebranche, Nicolas* (1638-1715)—French idealist philosopher.—41, 92
- Malthus, Thomas Robert* (1766-1834)—English reactionary economist, apostle of capitalism—preacher of misanthropic theory of population.—104, 114
- Manco-Capac* (10th c.)—founder of Inca state in South America (Peru), which lasted till Spanish invasion of sixteenth century.—118
- Mandeville, Bernard de* (1670-1733)—English democratic moralist writer and economist.—94
- Marat, Jean Paul* (1743-1793)—prominent figure in French Revolution, a leader of Jacobins, publicist and scholar.—78, 434
- Marceau, François-Séverin* (1769-1796)—French general prominent during French Revolution.—309
- Maria Theresa (Maria Theresia)* (1717-1780)—archduchess of Austria, empress of the "Holy Roman Empire".—300
- Marius, Gaius* (156-86 B.C.)—Roman general and politician.—602
- Marmont, Auguste Frédéric* (1774-1852)—marshal of France, close associate of Napoleon.—309
- Martin, Henri* (1810-1883)—French historian, liberal public figure.—302
- Masaryk, Tomas Garrigue* (1850-1937)—Czech politician, idealist philosopher, opposed Marxism. President of Czechoslovak Republic from 1918 to 1935.—316, 628-30, 631-39
- Masséna, André* (1756-1817)—marshal of France, fought in Napoleonic wars.—309
- Massinger, Philip* (1584-1640)—English dramatic poet, one of immediate successors of Shakespeare.—310
- Marx, Karl*—35, 67, 122, 130, 136, 140-44, 146, 153-54, 161-62, 166-67, 170-76, 177-82, 193-94, 200, 231, 253, 258-60, 263-56, 268, 316-17, 318, 322-23, 325, 331, 337-39, 341, 343, 346, 347, 352-53, 357-63, 366, 368-69, 371-73, 374-75, 379, 381, 382, 387, 389-91, 393, 396-400, 403, 408, 414, 416-17, 423, 425-29, 436, 440, 442-43, 449, 450-51, 455-65, 468, 469, 472-74, 477, 478, 480-95, 500-504, 511-14, 518, 524, 538-39, 544-45, 547-52, 555, 557, 563-65, 583-85, 587-89, 592-94, 617-18, 620, 628, 630-37, 639, 644-45, 648-49, 653, 655-57, 659-60, 667, 668-69, 678
- Maudsley, Henry* (1835-1918)—English psychiatrist.—563
- Maz Müller, Friedrich*—see Müller, Max
- Mechtnikov, Lev Ilyich* (1838-1888)—Russian geographer, sociologist and publicist, adherent of geographical trend in sociology.—147, 651
- Mehring, Franz* (1846-1919)—prominent figure in German working-class movement, historian and publicist; leader and theorist of Left wing of German Social-Democracy.—339
- Mellier, Jean Ecrit Meslier* (1664-1729)—French materialist and atheist. His *Testament* exposed clergy and nobility and advanced ideas of utopian communism.—36
- Menelik II* (1844-c. 1913)—Emperor (Negus) of Ethiopia (1889-c. 1913)—236
- Merovingians* (V-VIII)—Frankish dynasty.—138
- Métin, Albert* (1871-1918)—French publicist and politician.—542
- Metsu, Gabriel* (1629-1667)—Dutch painter.—310

- Metternich, Klemens* (1773-1859)—reactionary Austrian statesman, diplomatist, founder of Holy Alliance.—204
- Meyer, Hermann Rudolf* (1839-1899)—German economist, follower of Rodbertus.—520, 668
- Michelangelo Buonarroti* (1475-1564)—Great Italian sculptor, artist, architect and poet.—151, 310-11
- Middleton, Thomas* (c. 1570-1627)—English dramatist.—310
- Mignet, François Auguste Marie* (1796-1884)—French bourgeois historian of Restoration.—139, 223, 266, 297-99, 301-02, 312-13, 434-36, 444, 449, 454-55, 458, 465, 467, 611-12
- Mikhailovsky, Nikolai Konstantinovich* (1842-1904)—Russian sociologist and publicist, leader of liberal Narodniks; waged a fierce struggle against Marxism in legal journal he edited.—223, 226, 229, 252, 253-54, 257-66, 267-69, 275, 276-79, 281-82, 298, 639
- Mill, John Stuart* (1806-1873)—English bourgeois economist and positivist philosopher.—84, 96, 150, 201, 209, 212, 236, 278, 345, 653
- Millerand, Alexandre Etienne* (1859-1943)—French politician, joined socialist in 1890s, headed opportunist trend in French socialist movement. In 1899 was member of France's reactionary bourgeois government.—446, 466
- Mirabeau, Honoré Gabriel Riqueti* (1749-1791)—participant of French Revolution, outstanding orator, ideologist of liberal circles of nobility and upper sections of bourgeoisie.—275, 301, 304, 306
- Moleschott, Jacob* (1822-1893)—philosopher and physiologist, vulgar materialist.—134, 178, 336, 339, 363
- Molière (Jean Baptiste Poquelin)* (1622-1673)—great French dramatist.—164, 357, 626
- Molinari, Gustav de* (1819-1912)—Belgian economist.—277
- Moltke, Helmuth* (1800-1891)—prominent Prussian soldier, fieldmarshal, follower of Clausewitz.—196, 198
- Monod, Gabriel* (1844-1912)—played prominent part in educational reform in France, historian.—296-97, 314, 315
- Montesquieu, Charles* (1689-1755)—French Enlightener and sociologist.—51, 74, 92, 99, 126, 148, 297, 455, 604, 611, 646
- More, Sir Thomas* (1478-1535)—English humanist writer and statesman, one of the early representatives of utopian communism.—151
- Moreau, Jean Victor* (1763-1813)—French general, fought in revolutionary wars.—307
- Morellet, André* (1727-1819)—contributor to *l'Encyclopedie*.—63
- Morelly* (dates of birth and death are unknown)—prominent representative of utopian communism in France in eighteenth century.—190, 240
- Morgan, Lewis Henry* (1818-1881)—American ethnologist, made study of primitive society.—67, 184, 230
- Mortier, Edouard Adolphe* (1768-1835)—marshal of France, fought in Napoleonic wars.—309
- Mulhall, Michael G.* (1836-1900)—English economist and statistician.—526-29, 534
- Müller, Max* (1823-1900)—English linguist and historian of German origin.—195
- Murat, Joachim* (1767-1815)—marshal of France, fought in Napoleonic wars, King of Naples (1808-15).—309

N

- Nadezhdin, Nikolai Ivanovich* (1804-1856)—Russian critic,

- historian and ethnographer.—251
- Napoleon I (Napoléon Bonaparte)* (1769-1821)—Emperor of the French (1804-1814 and 1815).—163, 198, 219, 289, 301, 306, 308-09
- Napoleon III (Louis Napoléon Bonaparte)* (1808-1873)—Emperor of the French (1852-1870).—170
- Nebuchadnezzar II*—King of Babylon (604-562/61 B.C.).—114
- Necker, Suzanne, neé Curchod* (1739-1794)—one of most educated women of eighteenth-century France, her salon was frequented by prominent men of her time; wife of Finance Minister Jacques Necker.—48
- Nekrasov, Nikolai Alezeyeich* (1821-1878)—Russian poet, revolutionary democrat.—352
- Newton, Sir Isaac* (1642-1727)—great English mathematician, founder of classical mechanics.—90, 368
- Ney, Michel* (1769-1815)—marshal of France, one of closest associates of Napoleon.—309
- Nicholas I* (1796-1855)—Emperor of Russia (1825-55).—62, 65
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm* (1844-1900)—German reactionary idealist philosopher, ideological predecessor of fascism.—473
- Nordau, (Südfeld) Max Simon* (1849-1923)—German writer.—78
- O**
- Obolensky, Leonid Yegorovich* (1845-1906)—Russian idealist philosopher, man of letters, publisher and contributor to *Narodnik* journals.—205
- P**
- Palissot de Moutenoy, Charles* (1730-1814)—French reactionary writer, ardent opponent of Encyclopaedists.—44
- Parvus (Gelfand A. L.)* (1869-1924)—at turn of century member of German Social-Democratic Party, adhered to its Left wing; later broke with Social-Democracy, and became chauvinist.—349
- Pascal, Blaise* (1623-1662)—outstanding French mathematician, physicist and philosopher.—441
- Paulus, Heinrich Ebergard Gottlob* (1761-1851)—protestant theologian.—128
- Pelloutier, Fernand* (1867-1901)—prominent figure in French trade-union movement.—558
- Penn, William* (1644-1718)—founder of Pennsylvania.—118
- Pereire, Jacob-Emile* (1800-1875)—French banker, joined Saint-Simonists in twenties and thirties of nineteenth century.—446
- Pericles* (c. 495-429 B.C.)—leader of Athenian slave-owning democracy. "Periclean Age" marked the height of political and cultural development of Athens.—158
- Parlet, Adrien* (1795-1850)—famous French actor, who performed in plays by Molière and other dramatists; wrote book on influence of mores on comedy.—163
- Peter I* (1672-1725)—Tsar of Russia (1682-1721), Emperor of All Russia (1721-1725).—174
- Petit, Edouard* (b. 1885)—French historian biographer of Mignet.—436
- Pichegru, Charles* (1761-1804)—French general and politician, fought in revolutionary wars, later went over to enemies of Revolution. Took part in conspiracy against Napoleon in 1804.—309
- Pijnacker* (b. 1622)—Dutch painter.—310
- Pindar* (c. 522-c. 443 B.C.)—Greek lyric poet: his name came to denote fulsome praise.—380

Pirenne, Henri (1862-1935)—Belgian bourgeois historian.—296

Plutarch (c. 46-c. 125)—Greek moralist writer, author of *Parallel Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans*.—273

Pompadour, Jeanne Antoinette Potsson, marquise de (1721-1764)—mistress of Louis XV of France.—300-01, 302-03

Potter, Paul (1625-1654)—Dutch painter.—310

Price, Richard (1723-1791)—British economist and publicist.—70, 82, 182, 284

Priestley, Joseph (1733-1804)—prominent English chemist, materialist philosopher.—70, 82, 178, 182, 284, 382, 395

Proudhon, Pierre Joseph (1809-1865)—French publicist, economist and sociologist; founder of anarchism; ideologist of petty bourgeoisie.—190, 360, 415, 455, 503, 648

Pugachev, Yemelyan Ivanovich (c. 1742-1775)—leader of biggest anti-feudal peasant rising (1773-75) in Russia.—452

Pushkin, Alexander Sergeyevich (1799-1837)—great Russian poet.—417

R

Racine, Jean (1639-1699)—French dramatist, greatest representative of seventeenth-century classicism.—156-57, 627

Rambaud, Alfred Nicolas (1842-1905)—French historian of liberal trend.—310, 506-507

Raphael, Raffaello Santi (1483-1520)—celebrated painter of Italian Renaissance.—151, 310-11

Ratzel, Friedrich (1844-1904)—German geographer and ethnologist, founder of reactionary anthropo-geographical school.—651

Rasin, Stepan Timofeyevich (executed in 1671)—Don Cossack, leader of major anti-feudal popular rising in second half of seventeenth century.—452

Regnard, Jean François (1655-1709)—French dramatist.—164

Regulus, Marcus Atilius (d.c. 248 B.C.)—Roman general and politician.—48-49, 92, 96-97

Reinhold, Karl Leonhard (1758-1823)—German populariser of Kantian philosophy.—386, 401, 413-14

Rembrandt, Hermensz van Rijn (1606-1669)—celebrated Dutch painter and etcher.—310

Renée, Duchess of Ferrara (1510-1575)—daughter of Louis XII of France.—289

Révillle, Albert (1826-1906)—French professor, historian of religion.—152, 186

Ricardo, David (1772-1823)—English economist, one of founders of bourgeois classical political economy.—668

Richelieu, Louis François (1696-1788)—marshal of France.—300

Riehl Alois (1844-1925)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—386

Robespierre, Maximilien Marie-Isidore de (1758-1794)—outstanding figure in French Revolution, head of revolutionary government of Jacobin dictatorship.—301, 306, 307, 436

Robinet, Jean Baptiste René (1735-1820)—French materialist philosopher.—82, 329

Rodbertus-Jagetzow, Karl Johann (1805-1875)—German vulgar economist, preached "state socialism".—187, 196, 360, 544, 667, 669

Rogers, James Edwin Thorold (1823-1890)—English bourgeois economist and historian.—222-23, 224

Rodrigues, Benjamin-Olinde (1794-1851)—French economist, propagandised ideas of Saint-Simon, founder of journal *Producteur*.—430

Roland (d. 778)—Paladin, hero of French medieval epic.—157

Roland de la Platière, Jeanne-Manon (1754-1793)—Girondist, took part in French Revolution, was executed after establishment of Jacobin dictatorship.—273

Romano, Giulio (1492 or 1499-1546)—Italian painter and architect.—310

Rosenkranz, Johann Karl Friedrich (1805-1879)—German Hegelian philosopher and historian of literature.—335

Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712-1778)—French Enlightener, democrat, ideologist of petty bourgeoisie.—39, 46, 48-51, 67, 96, 113, 120, 190

Rousset, Léonce (1850-1938)—French officer, professor of high military school, wrote on history of art of war.—198

Rowntree, Benjamin Seebohm (b. 1871)—English industrialist and philanthropist.—548

Royer-Collard, Pierre Paul (1763-1845)—French politician, publicist, ideologist of moderate liberal circles of bourgeoisie.—455

Ruge, Arnold (1802-1880)—German radical publicist, Left Hegelian, collaborated with Marx in publishing *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*; subsequently national liberal.—428

Ruisdael (Ruysdael), Jacob van (1628 or 1629-1682)—Dutch landscape painter and etcher.—310

Rusanov, Nikolai Sergeevich (pseudonyms: Tarasov K., Kudrin N.) (b. 1859)—publicist, Narodnaya Volya member in his youth, later

Socialist-Revolutionary, white émigré after October Revolution.—195, 224, 256

S

Sainte-Beuve, Charles Augustin (1804-1869)—French literary critic and poet.—155, 299, 301-03, 306, 312, 322

Saint-Simon, Claude Henri (1760-1825)—great French utopian socialist.—139, 212, 430, 446-47, 458, 608-09, 617

Sallust (Gaius Sallustius Crispus) (86-34 B.C.)—Roman historian.—59

Sarto, Andrea del (1486-1531)—Florentine painter.—310

Sartorius von Waltershausen, Augustin (1852-1938)—German bourgeois economist.—546

Say, Jean Baptiste (1767-1832)—French bourgeois economist, representative of vulgar political economy.—172, 344

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm (1775-1854)—German philosopher, objective idealist.—127, 132, 337, 388, 590, 614-15

Schiller, Johann Friedrich (1759-1805)—German poet and dramatist.—237

Schmidt, Conrad (1863-1932)—German Social-Democrat, revisionist, neo-Kantian.—316-17, 321, 324-26, 331, 339-40, 379, 380-81, 386-91, 392-95, 395-401, 402-06, 407-09, 411-14, 415-20

Schmoller, Gustav Friedrich (1838-1917)—representative of German historical school in political economy.—520, 524

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1788-1860)—German idealist philosopher, ideologist of Prussian Junkerdom.—405, 632, 635

Schorlemmer, Karl (1834-1892)—German chemist, Communist, friend of Marx and Engels.—339

- Schultze, Fritz* (1846-1908)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—44
- Schulze-Gävernitz, Gerhart von* (1864-1943)—German bourgeois economist; tried to substantiate possibility of social peace in capitalist society.—341, 342-43, 345-47, 373-74, 518, 519, 524-25, 538, 663
- Schulze, Gottlob Ernst* (1761-1833)—German philosopher, subjective idealist; also called Schulze-Aenesidem, after his work *Aenesidemus* (1792).—401-02
- Schuppe, Wilhelm* (1836-1913)—German philosopher, subjective idealist, head of reactionary immanent school.—567
- Scipios*—famous patrician family of ancient Rome, belonging to Corneliagens. Among its chief members were Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder (c. 235-183 B.C.), who defeated Hannibal at Zama in 202 B.C., and Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus the Younger (c. 185-129 B.C.) who completed 3rd Punic War by capture and destruction of Carthage (146 B.C.).—602
- Sebastiano del Piombo* (1485-1547)—Italian painter.—151
- Seligman, Edwin Robert Anderson* (1861-1939)—American economist, professor of Columbia University, apologist of capitalism.—677
- Seneca, Lucius Annaeus* (c. 4 B.C.-65 A.D.)—Roman stoic philosopher, author, statesman.—71
- Shakespeare, William* (1564-1616)—English poet and dramatist.—132, 310, 377, 438, 626
- Shchedrin (Saltykov-Shchedrin), Mikhail Yevgrafovich* (1826-1889)—Russian satirical writer.—221
- Shutyakov P.*—translator of Croce's book into Russian.—658, 670-71
- Stdgwtk, Henry* (1838-1900)—English idealist philosopher.—169
- Steyès, Emmanuel Joseph* (1748-1836)—active in French Revolution, wrote famous pamphlet "Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?" (What Is the Third Estate?).—307
- Sigwart, Christoph von* (1830-1904)—German idealist logician, neo-Kantian.—567, 568-69
- Simcox, Edith*—British woman economist.—535, 553, 556
- Simmel, Georg* (1858-1918)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—289
- Singer, Paul* (1844-1911)—prominent German Social-Democrat.—340
- Sismondi, Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de* (1773-1842)—Swiss economist, petty-bourgeois critic of capitalism.—192
- Smith, Adam* (1723-1790)—Scottish economist, one of most prominent representatives of classical bourgeois political economy.—94-96
- Socrates* (c. 469-c. 399 B.C.)—Greek idealist philosopher.—48-49, 92, 278
- Sokolov, Nikolai Matveyevich* (b. 1860)—poet, critic and translator of philosophical works by Kant, Schopenhauer and others.—570
- Sombart, Werner* (1863-1941)—German vulgar bourgeois economist, ideologist of German imperialism, depicted capitalism as harmonious system of economy—442, 449-50
- Soranus, Bernard Joseph* (1706-1871)—French dramatic poet, friend of Voltaire.—604, 646
- Sorel, Georges* (1847-1922)—French anarcho-syndicalist.—222
- Soubise, Charles de Rohan, prince de* (1715-1787)—peer and marshal

- of France, fought in Seven Years War.—300, 302-04
- Soult, Nicolas de Dieu Jean* (1769-1851)—French neo-Kantian philosopher.—32, 55, 79
- Spasovich, Vladimir Danilovich* (1829-1906)—Russian jurist and publicist.—249
- Spencer, Herbert* (1820-1903)—English positivist philosopher, head of so-called organic school of philosophy.—231, 409, 411-12, 420
- Spinoza, Baruch (Benedict)* (1632-1677)—Dutch materialist philosopher.—40, 92, 278, 320, 330-31, 334-35, 337-39, 362-64, 643
- Staël, Mme de (Anne Louise Germaine Necker, baronne de Staël-Holstein)* (1766-1817)—French writer, held literary salon prior to Revolution.—137, 155, 158, 608
- Stammler, Rudolf* (1856-1939)—German jurist and neo-Kantian philosopher.—285-89, 484, 494-95
- Stankevich, Nikolai Vladimirovich* (1813-1840)—Russian idealist philosopher, leader of Moscow philosophical circle in 1830s.—642
- Stanley, Sir Henry Morton* (orig. John Rowlands) (1841-1904)—British explorer in Africa.—625
- Steen, Jan* (1626-1679)—Dutch painter.—310
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- Stendhal (Beyle), Henri Marie* (1783-1842)—French novelist.—310
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- Steuart, James* (1712-1780)—English economist, representative of mercantilism.—115
- Stirner, Max* (pseudonym of Schmidt, Johann Caspar) (1806-1856)—German philosopher, Left Hegelian, theorist of anarchism.—635
- Strauss, David Friedrich* (1808-1874)—German theologian and idealist philosopher, Young Hegelian, author of *Das Leben Jesu* (Life of Christ) devoted to criticism of Christian dogmas.—128, 635
- Struve, Pyotr Bernardovich* (1870-1944)—Russian bourgeois economist and publicist, prominent "Legal Marxist", one of theorists and organisers of Constitutional-Democratic (Cadet) party; after October Revolution came out against Soviet power; Whiteemigré.—363, 372, 376, 474, 477-90, 492-504, 508-09, 512-13, 518, 538-41
- Stuarts*—Scottish dynasty which ruled Scotland (from 1371) and England (1603-1649 and 1660-1714).—610
- Suard, Jean Baptiste* (1733-1817)—French critic and journalist, monarchist.—52-53, 76, 603, 605
- Suvorov, Alexander Vasilyevitch* (1730-1800)—great Russian soldier.—301, 304

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- Tacitus, Publius Cornelius* (c. 55-c. 120)—Roman historian.—154
- Taine, Hippolyte* (1828-1893)—French art critic, philosopher and historian.—151, 155, 157-63, 171, 195, 311, 322, 626
- Tamerlane* (c. 1336-1405)—Mongol conqueror.—197
- Tarde, Gabriel* (1843-1904)—one of founders of psychological trend in sociology, Frenchman.—396
- Terborch (Ter Borch), Gerard* (1617-1681)—Dutch painter.—310
- Thierry, Augustin* (1795-1856)—French historian, ideologist of liberal bourgeoisie.—137-39, 142, 223, 266, 297-98, 431-32, 433-34, 436, 444-45, 447-49, 454-55, 458, 609-11, 612

Thiers, Louis-Adolphe (1797-1877)—French statesman and historian, butcher of Paris Commune.—140, 142, 229-99, 436

Tiberius Claudius Nero (42 B.C.-37 A.D.)—Roman emperor who strengthened military dictatorship of slave-owners.—100

Tieftrunk, Johann Heinrich (1759-1837)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—402

Tiele, Cornelis Petrus (1830-1902)—Dutch theologian, historian of religion.—152, 185

Tikhomirov, Lev Alexandrovich (1852-1923)—member of Narodnaya Volya executive committee; in 1870s renegade, ardent reactionary from 1880.—358, 574, 635

Tintoretto, J. (Robusti) (1518-1594)—famous Italian painter.—310

Titian (Tiziano Vecelli) (c. 1477-1576)—Italian painter.—151, 310

Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus (39-81)—Roman emperor (79-81).—65

Tocqueville, Alexis (1805-1859)—French publicist, reactionary politician, historian of bourgeois liberal trend.—223, 277, 441, 456, 504-506, 508, 613

Toland, John (1670-1722)—prominent English materialist philosopher.—80-81

Tolstoy Leo (Lev Nikolayevich) (1828-1910) Russian novelist; in his ethical writings preached non-resistance to evil.—100, 356, 646

Trajan (Marcus Ulpius Trajanus) (c. 53-117)—Roman emperor (98-117).—65

Tsebrikova, Maria Konstantinovna (1835-1917)—Russian liberal authoress.—66

Tugan-Baranovsky, Mikhail Ivanovich (1865-1919)—Russian bourgeois economist, in 1890s prominent representative of "Legal Marxism", later member of

bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic (Cadet) party, active counter-revolutionary.—491, 661, 674

Turenne, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne (1611-1675)—marshal of France, fought in the Thirty Years War.—302

Turgot, Anne Robert Jacques (1727-1781)—French economist, physiocrat, statesman.—47, 63-65

Tylor, Sir Edward Burnett (1832-1917)—English ethnographer and sociologist.—185, 242-43

U

Ueberweg, Friedrich (1826-1881)—German bourgeois historian of philosophy.—42, 164-65, 402, 572

Uspensky, Gleb Ivanovich (1843-1902)—Russian writer; brilliantly depicted suppression and lack of rights of urban poor and peasants.—203, 254-55, 263, 364, 582

V

Van de Velde, Adrian (1836-1897)—Dutch painter.—310

Vandervelde, Emile (1866-1938)—leader of Belgian Workers' Party, opportunist and social-chauvinist leader of Second International.—373, 442

Vanloo, Charles Andrew (1705-1765)—painter of Dutch extraction, prominent representative of Academic school in mid-eighteenth-century France.—273

Van Ostade, Adrian (1610-1684)—Dutch painter and engraver.—310

Vernadsky, Ivan Vasilyevich (1821-1884)—Russian economist; known because of his polemic with Chernyshevsky in which he defended bourgeois system.—205

Vernes, Maurice Louis (1845-1923)—French publicist, author of

works in history of religion.—
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Veronese (Cagliari), Paolo (1528-1588)—Italian painter of Venetian school.—310

Vico, Giambattista (1668-1744)—Italian sociologist, tried to find objective laws of social development.—144, 297

Villemain, Abel François (1790-1870)—French critic and politician; leader of liberal opposition during Restoration.—155

Vinci, Leonardo da (1452-1519)—Italian painter and scholar of Renaissance.—151, 310, 311

Vogt, Karl (1817-1895)—German naturalist, representative of vulgar materialism.—134, 331, 336, 330, 363, 416

Voit, Karl von (1831-1908)—German physiologist.—542

Volgin (pseudonym of G. V. Plekhanov).—209

Voltaire, François Marie (Arouet) (1694-1778)—French deist philosopher, prominent representative of 18th-century bourgeois Enlightenment, was opposed to absolutism and Catholicism.—39, 46, 47-48, 51, 53, 59, 66-68, 69-70, 76, 110, 119, 148, 154, 173, 323, 417, 428, 601-03, 607-08, 622

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Webb, Beatrice (1858-1943) and *Sidney* (1859-1947)—English public figures, founders of Fabian Society.—498, 520

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Weenix Jan Baptist (b.c. 1621)—Dutch painter.—310

Windelband, Wilhelm (1848-1915)—German neo-Kantian philosopher.—390

Wolf, Julius (1862-1937)—German economist, representative of vulgar political economy.—316, 346, 374, 662

Woltmann, Ludwig (1871-1907)—German sociologist, revisionist, neo-Kantian.—565

Wouwerman, Philips (1619-1668)—Dutch painter.—310

Wright, Carroll D. (1840-1909)—U.S. economist and statistician.—539, 546

Wundt, Wilhelm Max (1832-1920)—German bourgeois psychologist and idealist philosopher.—641

Xenophon (c. 430-355/4 B.C.)—Greek historian.—49, 104

Xerxes (c. 519-465 B.C.)—King of Persia (486-465 B.C.).—302

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Zasulich, Vera Ivanovna (Karelin) (1849-1919)—Russian revolutionary Narodnik, subsequently Social-Democrat, participated in founding Emancipation of Labour group, later Menshevik.—542, 574, 661, 674

Zeller, Eduard (1814-1908)—German bourgeois historian of ancient philosophy.—401, 403, 416

Zhukovsky, Yuli Galaktionovich (1822-1907)—Russian vulgar economist and publicist, author of article "Karl Marx and His Book on Capital", which contained malicious attacks against Marxism.—229, 264, 268-69

Ziehen, Theodor (1862-1950)—professor of philosophy in Halle, physiologist and psychiatrist, known for his attacks against materialism.—567

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